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SONGS

FROM THE PARSONAGE:

OR

LYRICAL TEACHING.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

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TO ———

(WITH THESE POEMS.)

If not from the mind, may the gift have a charm
  At least from the heart, of the giver;
Who, if he could shield, as he loves thee, from harm,
  Would render thy "peace as a river:"*
A river whose waters all tranquilly flow,
  Just sparkling with heaven-wrought motion,
Until, with transition both gentle and slow,
  They expand in the fathomless ocean.

But the giver is feeble for this as the gift!
  As feeble as when thou didst bless him,
Embraced in that arm which so loved to uplift,
  And fondle, and soothe, and caress him:
But O! there is One who is mighty to keep,
  And tender and kind as none other,
May He guard thee, till, peacefully falling asleep,
  Thou awakest in heaven—my Mother?

* Isa. lxvi. 12.

CONTENTS.

SONGS FROM THE PARSONAGE.

I.

"THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND SONG."

PSALM CXVIII. 14.

I.

How sweetly many a bard has sung
  Before an earthly shrine!
With equal skill how few have strung
  Their harps to love divine!

II.

Is heavenly love a theme so high,
It suits not earthly lyre—
A theme but fitted for the sky,
And the eternal quire?

III.

Or is it that where fancy lives
Ambition dwelleth too,
Whilst He who heavenly wisdom gives
Still seeks the lowly few?

IV.

Or can it be that human love
More wins the heart and eye,
And so has mightier power to move
The chords of melody?

V.

Oh! this, methinks, can scarce be true,
Whate'er we say of those;
Let love divine the heart imbue,
And calmly there repose;—

VI.

And thence shall sweetest songs ascend
  That ever reached the sky,
Though haply few an ear shall lend,
  Save He who sits on high.

VII.

If voiceless oft, yet He who knows
  The heart can hear its song,
And well distinguish, though it flows
  Angelic hymns among.

VIII.

But scattered widely there have been
  A small and chosen band,
Who struck such vocal notes, I ween,
  And with so skilled a hand—

IX.

That some but little wont to feel,
  And still less wont to weep,
Have felt a power within them steal,
  And o'er their senses creep,—

X.

Which half constrained their hearts to turn
  From shadows of the earth,
And mourn the past, and inly burn
  For things of lofty birth.

XI.

Or sure, a few it quite constrained:
  Their dull or reckless ear,
Blest from on high the song hath gained
  With notes so deep and clear,—

XII.

So rich with all the love of heaven,
  So full of proffered grace,
That by the cross they've vowed and striven,
  To gird them for the race;—

XIII.

The race for the eternal crown,
  And palace in the skies;
And Heaven has looked in mercy down,
  And they have won the prize.

XIV.

O God! I humbly ask this gift,
  I crave the power from Thee,
The human soul on high to lift
  With sacred melody.

XV.

Dead be my heart to other aim,
  And in the dust be trod
My worthless lyre, if e'er it claim
  What it should win for God.

XVI.

I ask thee but the holy skill
  To fire my fellow's breast
With love—but be it ever still
  The brightest and the best;—

XVII.

The love of Thee, my God and Lord!
  Be this the end I seek;
For this can hallow every chord—
  E'en mine, so poor and weak.

II.

"GOD IS LOVE."

1 JOHN iv. 16.

I.

WHY comes this fragrance on the summer breeze,
  The blended tribute of ten thousand flowers,
To me a frequent wanderer mid the trees
  That form these gay, though solitary bowers?
One answer is around, beneath, above—
The echo of the voice, that—"God is love."

II.

Why bursts such melody from bush and tree,
  The overflowing of each songster's heart,
So filling mine that it can scarcely be
  Content to listen, but would take its part?
'Tis but one song I hear, where'er I rove,
Though countless be the notes, that—"God is love."

III.

Why leaps the streamlet down the mountain's side,
  Hastening so blithely to the vale beneath,
To cheer the shepherd's thirsty flock, or glide
  Where the bright sun has left a faded wreath,
Or, rippling, aid the music in the grove?
Its own glad voice replies, that—"God is love."

IV.

In heaven's starred pavement at the midnight hour,
  In roseate hues that come at morning's dawn,
In the bright bow athwart the falling shower,
  In woods and waters, hills and velvet lawn,—
One truth is written—all conspire to prove,
What grace of old revealed, that—"God is love."

V.

Nor less this pulse of health, this step of joy,
  This heart so moved with beauty, perfume, song,
This spirit soaring through a gorgeous sky,
  Or diving ocean's coral caves among,
Fleeter than darting fish, or swiftest dove—
All, all declare the same, that—"God is love."

VI.

Is it a fallen world on which I gaze?
  Am I as deeply fallen as the rest—
Yet, tasting joys above my utmost praise,
  Instead of wandering forlorn, unblest?
It is as if an unseen spirit strove
To grave upon my heart, that—"God is love."

VII.

Yet, would'st thou see, my soul, this truth displayed
  In characters which wondering angels read,
And read adoring? Go, imploring aid
  To look with faith, behold the Saviour bleed!
That Saviour is the Lord! Oh! what can prove,
If this convince thee not, that—"God is love!"

VIII.

Cling to his cross!—and let thy ceaseless prayer
  Be that thy grasp may fail not; and ere long
'Twill bear thee upward to that temple where
  No more the echo, but the song—the song!
Of angels, saints, and seraphim above
Proclaims for ever, that our "God is love!"

III.

PIETY IN HIGH PLACES.

"I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."—1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

I.

"SALVATION! oh, salvation!" cry—
On India's plains once sweetly sung
Britannia's bard; and many a tongue
Soon learnt to join the rapture high,
Till the loud echo filled the sky.

II.

When in thine ear that music rings,
Christian, oft kneel thee down, and pray,
That the glad sound may win its way,
Borne upon high and heavenly wings,
Mid sceptres, palaces, and kings.

III.

The sun, whose beams with blessings go
  Through every clime his glory lights,
  First gilds the lofty mountain heights;
And, melted there, the winter's snow
Streams through the brightening vales below.

IV.

Blest be our God! we may not say—
  The lowliest flower in many a dale
  Might rise against so dire a tale—
That nowhere do the waters play,
Until the mountain snows give way.

V.

But witness Judah's rise and fall,
  As Judah's kings God's altars stain,
  Or fetch the Ark and rear the fane,
With trump, and song, and festival,—
How royal goodness blesses all!

VI.

Did not the great Jehovah say,—
  And grave with iron on the rock,
  Lest fools who laugh at sin should mock,—
He would not turn the wrath away
Fired by Manasseh's godless sway?*

VII.

Doth not the same great voice attest,
  That mercies shall be showered down,
  Where piety adorns the crown:
The monarch happy, and at rest;
The people blessing him, and blest? †

VIII.

When in thine ear the echo rings
  Of threat or promise, lift the cry,
  "Salvation! oh, Salvation!" fly,
Borne upon high and heavenly wings,
Mid sceptres, palaces, and kings!

* 2 Kings xxi. 11, 12; xxiii. 26, 27.
† 1 Kings ix. 4—6. 2 Chron. xxxi.

IV.

"THY WILL BE DONE."

Oh! how profoundly tranquil is the peace
Of him whose mind, my God, is stayed on Thee!
The storm may come, and earthly hopes may cease,
And all that once was full of joy may be
Lost, and for ever—but while he may see
Thine arm directing, let the storm beat on—
It will not pass unheeded—but shall he
Tremble and murmur, upon whom hath shone
From the glad Sun of righteousness a ray
Showing the pathway to a home above,
Where that same hand ere long shall wipe away
His every tear, which now doth smite in love?
No—from his heart he prays, "Thy will be done,"
And even in grief can feel, Thy will and his are one.

V.

"ALL MY SPRINGS ARE IN THEE."

PSALM lxxxvii. 7.

I.

WITH craving, wayward, restless mind,
  Man roams a weary waste,
And thinks mid arid sands to find
  A spring no eye hath traced.

II.

Exhausted oft, some spot is sought,
  Where, anxious and opprest,
He lays him down—but there is nought
  On which his head may rest.

III.

And yet he sleeps, and haply dreams,
  And slakes his burning thirst—
Then wakes beside the fancied streams,
  Still craving as at first.

IV.

Risen, yet unrefreshed, he still
  His bootless search resumes,
And wanders on, and ever will,
  Till heaven his path illumes.

V.

Oh! does he learn this truth at last,
  And, turning in despair
From barren sands, look up, and cast
  His wants and sorrows there?

VI.

Soon does the eye of faith descry,
  What cannot else be seen,
"Streams in the desert" flowing high
  'Twixt banks for ever green.

VII.

He stoops to drink—then kneels to bless
  The Healer of his woes;
And, as he kneels, the wilderness
  All blossoms as the rose.

VIII.

The Cedar and the Shittah trees,
  The Myrtle, and the Pine,*
As if to shadow him, he sees
  Their varied branches twine.

IX.

And high above, the brazen hue †
  In the heavens were sought in vain;
'Tis now a canopy of blue,
  As altered as the plain.

X.

Oppressed at length with gratitude,
  He sinks to sleep once more;
And wakes to find his joys renewed,
  Or brighter than before.

* Isa. xli. 19. † Deut. xxviii. 23.

XI.

Again in humble prayer he kneels,
  And then, with tranquil breast,
He rises, walks with God, and feels
  Of all he sought possessed.

XII.

And now, 'tis not a dream of joy—
  'Tis sweet reality—
'Tis happiness without alloy—
  "His springs are all in thee."

VI.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole famil in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."—EPH. iii. 14—19.

I.

IF thou would'st fathom Heaven's deep love,
First let thy spirit soar above,
And see on lofty throne
The mighty God, the Prince of Peace,
Worshipped with songs that never cease
To tell his praise alone.

II.

O'er rippling waves at eventide,
I've seen a vessel gently glide;
  And melody from thence,
Wafted above the waters clear
By soft winds to my listening ear,
  Has filled my ravished sense.

III.

And I have stood in 'tangled grove,
While sweetly sang the bird I love,
  Answering a bird afar;
Till strains on every side arose,
Such as no other warbler knows,
  Save midnight's minstrel rare.

IV.

And where the deep-toned organ swells,
And many a voice uplifted tells
  All that it may of praise,
Oh! more than mortal ear hath heard,
Waked by that melody, hath stirred
  My soul with blest amaze.

V.

But poor were all to that high strain,
Which, filling Zion's lofty fane,
  Extols the King of Kings;
Ten thousand times ten thousand pour
Their raptures, yet would praise him more,
  Each kindling as he sings!

VI.

Nor marvel—countless worlds have sprung
To being at his word;—and, hung
  On his sustaining might,
They mark them in their orbits roll,
As subject to his high controul,
  As were a sparrow's flight!

VII.

He speaks: they hasten to fulfil,
On love's fleet wings, His sacred will;
  Or oh! when once arose
A rebel thought in their pure world,
The offending seraphim were hurled
  To endless, hopeless woes.

VIII.

His glorious temple still is bright,
Though quenched be some created light,
  And still the song ascends :
The love that purest spirits know
Adores when mercy spreads her bow,
  Nor less when vengeance rends

IX.

In all they read that "God is love"—
The thunders of his wrath but prove
  He cannot suffer sin :
Unpunished, 'twere creation's curse,
A signal in the universe
  For riot to begin.

X.

And then, the arm that punishes
How oft they see stretched forth to bless !
  And not themselves alone,
But all that angel's glance descries
Through worlds on worlds that endless rise
  Submissive to his throne !

XI.

The sun that ever, day and night,
On climes and creatures infinite
  Sheds good, doth image Him;
But only to a darkened sphere;
For to the eye that sees Him clear
  The sun itself is dim.

XII.

It lights not His bright dwelling-place;
Before the glory of His face
  Its own would fade away:
'Tis but a lustre, from His throne
Suspended, countless fathoms down,
  To form an earthly day.

XIII.

Now, let thy ravished soul descend
Swift from this glorious scene, and wend
  To one thou less canst scan;
Go, stand on Calvary's hill, and there
Behold, while curses rend the air,
  This God a dying man!

XIV.

Dying upon a cross of shame
For sins of every hue and name
  That call for heaven's dread curse;
Dying for creatures of his hands,
Who trampled on his own commands,
  And stained his universe!

XV.

Dying that men deserving woes
None but a hopeless spirit knows,
  Might yet escape his ire,
And in that deeply pierced side
Might all their sins and sorrows hide—
  Then join the ceaseless quire!

XVI.

Before this wonder infinite
Sink'st thou oppressed? An angel's sight
  Were dazzled by the blaze
Of love, that, beaming from that brow,
Ne'er streamed thro' heaven's courts as now!
  How then can mortal gaze?

XVII.

Aright thou canst not—till there shine,
Deep in thy soul, that light divine,
  Which strength with weakness blends:
His feeble emblem in the sky
Is seen not to a mortal eye,
  Save by the light it lends.

XVIII.

Fall then before the Cross with me!
Together let us bow the knee;
  And, with intense desire,
Implore this Lord of boundless grace,
To make these souls his dwelling place,
  And faith to gaze inspire.

XIX.

Then love, within us and above,
Shall sweetly answer—love for love,
  Until, their wings unfurled,
Our spirits mount with rapturous flight,
And, heaven exchanging faith for sight,
  Love bloom in its own world.

VII.

THE TOPMOST BOUGHS.

I.

WHAT time the storm was wrestling with the woods,
  And the hare trembled in her leafy bed,
And tumult raged in deepest solitudes,
  And the swarth herdsman felt unwonted dread,—
I marked the topmost branches of an oak
Rent from the tree as by a lightning stroke,
And, borne away upon the viewless blast,
Against a bleak hill's side with shattered foliage
  cast.

II.

Yet far beneath, round that same broken tree,
  A honeysuckle twined her branches frail,
Which, while the tempest raged so mightily,
  Just waved, as yielding to a gentle gale,
Nor lost a blossom ; for around her close
Hung sheltering boughs, that, as the storm arose,
Still closer bent to her—as if in love
They would her blooms protect from the dread
  blast above.

III.

'Tis an old tale—but I did hear it now,
  As if proclaimed by the winds on high,
That peace is far below the topmost bough,
  And safety lieth in obscurity ;
And I will learn that lesson by the grace
Of Him who chose on earth a lowly place,
And feel, with deeper gratitude to heaven,
Such place I need not seek—since love divine hath
  given.

VIII.

THE SHOWER IS PAST.

I.

The shower is past;—and only one glad song
As yet doth welcome the returning rays;
But that so clear, so full, it were to wrong
Its melody, methinks, to speak its praise,
Except with answering sweetness:—Oh! again
Repeat, bright bird, thine own rich notes, before
Others do shake their plumes, and join the strain—
Thy single voice to me now lovelier seems than more.

II.

How fresh the air! how sweet the hawthorn blossom!
The very earth is fragrant—as the shower
Had left some delicate perfume on her bosom,
While making yet more odorous every flower:
The grass, the trees, all glisten, and reflect
With dazzling brightness the descending beams—
Ah! who that looked around could now suspect
That even one spot on earth with sin and sorrow teems!

III.

Could any deem it were a rebel earth,
That thus is clothed with beauty as a robe?
Could any, listening now to nature's mirth,
Believe the mortal monarch of the globe
Treads it in tears? Oh, righteous, bounteous God!
Let other beams * be yet more largely given;
Let other showers † descend on man's abode,
Till human hearts accord more both with earth and heaven.

* "O send out thy light and thy truth."—Ps. xliii. 3.
† "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."—Isa. xliv. 3.

IX.

TO T. F. D.

I.

Tender, immortal, feeble, priceless treasure!
My first-born babe, I clasp thee to my heart—
But, ah! while speak thy father's eyes of pleasure,
Why from thine own do tears of sorrow start?

II.

And yet, my child, there is a time for weeping—
And oh! what fitter moment to begin
Than when we enter first upon the reaping
Of the sad fruits which sprang from Eden's sin!

III.

Of her, whose hand first plucked the tree forbidden,
Well was it asked, 'What is it thou hast done?'
All the dire ills in future ages hidden
How had it withered could her heart have known!

IV.

No mortal eye had borne the dreadful vision
  Piercing through all the countless years of woe;
And, kindled thus, the anguish of contrition
  No mortal breast had strength to undergo.

V.

Age in its eve of feebleness, and sorrow,
  Youth in its morning, manhood in its prime,
Striving in vain from future years to borrow
  Something to gild, or hide the present time;

VI.

And tender infancy at first awaking,
  Like a sweet floweret opening 'ere the spring,
Shrinking to feel an earnest of the aching,
  And wants and woes that future storms may bring;—

VII.

But truce to thoughts like these!—my heart shall rather
  Trace in those dew-drops on thine infant cheek
A coming day of sunshine, and shall gather
  A pledge of glory when the shadows break.

VIII.

In thy first hour of being thou wert given,
An humble offering to a God of love;
And many a prayer for thee shall reach the heaven,
While lip can quiver, or the heart-strings move.

IX.

Some faithful ones and fond to thee united
Shall feel the tie of kindred far away;
And two shall oft, with sacred joy delighted,
Beside thine infant path kneel down and pray.

X.

And He will hear, who once, with tend'rest feeling,
Called to his arms the little ones and blest;
In deed and accent thus at once revealing
The love enshrined for childhood in his breast.

XI.

And He will bear the weak yet fond entreaty
Within the veil of Zion's hallowed fane;
And God shall listen with an ear of pity,
While pleads that voice which never pleads in vain.

XII.

There rests alone my trust—I know none other—
Trust I too boldly? Nay, my Lord approves:
Even now, methinks, He loves thee as a brother,*
And he can help as greatly as he loves.

XIII.

Unlike the mortal arms that would defend thee,
Or eyes that fain would ever watch thee here,
His arm divine unceasing aid can lend thee,
His eye perceive through midnight darkness clear.

XIV.

Oh! to thine heart may He be ever dearer
Than all that soon will strongly tempt below;
And, as each passing year shall bring thee nearer
A brighter world, may love still brighter glow!

XV.

Thine be no service of a breast unfeeling,
That works for hire, and seeks a heaven at death;
But thine be present joy, and light revealing
A heaven reflected on thy path beneath.

* "He is not ashamed to call them brethren."—Heb. ii. 11.

XVI.

Amidst the crowd, so tossed on every billow
Of contest fierce, from pride's exhaustless source,
May'st thou be fixed, and flourish, as the willow
Whose root is firm beside the water-course.

XVII.

Drink of the living streams, the word eternal;
To faith's bright eye for ever fresh and clear;
At once descending from the fount supernal,
And, therefore, free from all pollution here.

XVIII.

So shalt thou see, and always see admiring,
That pure religion springs from one pure root,
Through which the tree, for ever still aspiring,
Derives its buds, its blossoms, and its fruit.

XIX.

That root is faith—faith in the Rock of ages—
The buds, the blossoms, and the fruit are love,
Growing and ripening, though the tempest rages,
And soon to be matured in climes above.

XX.

May nothing tempt thee with a show of learning,
  Or subtle wit, or sage philosophy,
To quit this truth; but, curious folly spurning,
  As "spiders' webs," * oh, love simplicity!

XXI.

Thy "God is love"—love fills the courts of heaven;
  To grow in likeness to thy Maker here—
Be this thy simple aim while life is given,
  And heaven shall prove ere long thy native
    sphere.

XXII.

Native, my child; for then thy deathless spirit
  Shall pour its praise for life of purer birth
Than e'er was given to mortal to inherit
  From earthly parents: earth can yield but earth.

XXIII.

Yet, may these arms thine infant form enfolding,
  Guide thee aright with ever watchful care!
And oh! may all who love thee here, beholding
  Thy face on high, for ever love thee there!

* Isa. lix.

XXIV.

And now, my babe, may guardian angels tend thee,
  The Spirit sanctify, the Saviour keep,
And, for that Saviour's sake, may God defend thee,
  Till safe arrived where thou no more shalt weep!

X.

THE LOST SHEEP.

The dove, however widely she may roam,
And she of fleeter wing that from afar
Comes with the summer breeze o'er ocean's foam,
And well nigh all the birds and beasts that are,
If no insuperable hindrance bar,
By subtle instinct find the pathway home;
But one that wanders oft is singular,
And ever needs the shepherd, 'ere she come
Back to the fold from whence her feet have strayed,
However lone she feel and desolate,
And of unnumbered enemies afraid,—
And man, *lost* man is like her—he would wait,
Wretched for ever in the wilderness,
But for an eye that sees and pities his distress.

XI.

THE CUCKOO.

I.

I LOVE the bird that tells a tale of spring,
And that from morn till night her whole employ;
I love the bird whose note unvarying,
Proclaims to all the world her gentle joy.

II.

Sweet herald of the fairest things that be!
Whose voice now seems so near, now far remote—
Oh! cease not; for that breathing call to me
Is dear as even Philomel's high note.

III.

A thousand thoughts are thronging on my brain;
And memory, fraught with many a vision fair,
Now brings my very childhood back again,
Which passing years have well nigh stripped of care.

IV.

Strange is the power of years! while looking back,
  The brighter spots of life are clearly seen:
Just where the sun has shone upon the track;
  And darkness settles where the clouds have been.

V.

Yet, had life's morning griefs—'tis all I know:
  The tears of childhood often fall and fast;
But God is good—and as our moments flow,
  The present still escapes the distant past.

VI.

Home of my earliest days! thou still art dear:
  That note recalls thine image for awhile,
Where every sorrow found a ready tear,
  And all my joys were welcomed with a smile.

VII.

Yet, 'twas not where the Cuckoo's voice is heard,
  That first I felt the pleasantness of life;
But far away from where the modest bird
  Doth love to haunt—a city's smoke and strife.

VIII.

How then are childhood's pleasures linked with thee?
  Whence the heart-touching power of thy voice,
Thou ceaseless shouter in the apple-tree,
  Whose life's whole business seemeth to rejoice?

IX.

'Tis one of countless things I cannot tell:
  'Tis like that kindred mystery, as deep,
A blue-bell's power to waken from their cell
  Feelings that in me sleep—how lightly sleep!

X.

Though rarely, yet thy voice I sometimes heard,
  As there were times when I espied the flower,
In childhood's walks: and so I loved thee, bird,
  As childhood often loves—with lasting power.

XI.

I loved thee partly for thy note that owns
  No likeness amid all in earth or air;
But more, methinks, because thy vernal tones
  Came blent with orchards, flowers, and meadows fair.

XII.

And, it might be, I loved thee not the less,
  Because I ne'er had seen thy slender wing:
No plumage beautiful as fancy's dress;
  No form so fair as her imagining.

XIII.

And now an old and welcome friend thou art,
  With whom I love to talk of times gone by,
And things that still are living in my heart;
  My spirit's wealth; treasures of memory;

XIV.

Fond recollections of the woods and fields;
  Perhaps the dearer for the contrast strong
With all the sights and sounds a city yields
  To pain them most who dote upon thy song.

XV.

Though childhood had its griefs, as well as joys,
  And less of pleasure than my later years,
Nothing is linked, sweet bird, with thy loved voice
  But bright and sunny things whose memory cheers.

XVI.

Thou 'mind'st of the holydays of life,
  The vernal afternoons of early days;
Seasons with gladness and affection rife,
  And all that nature loveliest arrays.

XVII.

But more than all—and hence I love thee now
  Better than ever, messenger of spring—
Thou tellest, hidden in thy leafy bough,
  How good to all that lives is nature's King.

XVIII.

Thy heart is full of joy—yea, overflows;
  And countless birds, and lambs, and insects small
Are glad as thou, while every flower that blows
  Around thee, seems to brighten at thy call.

XIX.

And I partake with each!—I who alone
  Deserve a life of deep, unmingled sadness,
Wake with the fragrant breeze, and thy sweet tone,
  To take my share so large in nature's gladness!

XX.

How good to all that lives is nature's King!
  Again, again, sweet bird, shout, shout thy praise!
And you, ye warblers, loud, and louder sing,
  And forests, hills, and streams, your voices raise!

XXI.

And I, least worthy, too will lift my song,
  Till distant echoes all around shall ring,
And this glad sound with answering voice prolong
  "How good to all that lives is nature's King!",

XII.

JE MOURRAI SEUL.

Pascal.

I.

MAN was not formed to live alone,
  Nor yet alone to die:
Through life he needs some friendly tone,
  Nor less, when death is nigh.

II.

Nor less? Oh! rather let me sink
  To nothingness once more,
Than stand alone on Jordan's brink,
  Or quit alone its shore!

III.

In health, in bright prosperity,
  I need a voice divine,
To whisper that it comes from Thee,
  And that myself am thine.

IV.

What then, uncheered from heaven, the gloom,
  When earthly joys are flown!
Oh, God! preserve me from that doom!
  I cannot die alone!

V.

The voice which once in mercy said,
  As o'er the heaving tide
It came—"Tis I, be not afraid;"
  And fears were cast aside;—

VI.

That voice, beside my dying bed,
  Must whisper still, "Tis I;"
Or, filled with overwhelming dread,
  I dare not—cannot die!

VII.

But let me those glad accents hear,
  And then, though tempests roar,
And the big waves roll dark and drear,
  Fearless I'll quit the shore!

XIII.

THE MOSSY OLD OAK.

I.

Know ye the scent of the mossy old oak
  Afar in the forest's shade?
Hath it never within thine heart awoke
  A love for the sheltered glade?
Scarce sweeter to me is the violet,
  The sunny bank breathing o'er,
And I never have yet with that odour met,
  But I lov'd the woods the more.

II.

It is there that the dove delights to breathe
  Her pensive and lulling note,
And the woodbine her slender branch to wreathe,
  And the kite to wheel and float;
'Tis there that the squirrel from tree to tree
  Winds safely as flits the bird,
And the rabbit at evening frisks with glee
  Where the rustling leaves are stirred.

III.

It is near the old oak the streamlet sings,
  As if it rejoiced to be
So hidden awhile in its wanderings
  From the mountain to the sea;
And the pheasant comes there at eve to sip,
  From the brake where she was born,
And the woodcock from far his bill to dip
  For food on a frosty morn.

IV.

And the fox, and the wild-cat, and the owl
  Go there in the night for prey,
And as guiltlessly too in darkness prowl
  As others have prowled by day;
And there, while the moon sheds her silvery light
  On all in the woods or plains,
Sweet Philomel gladdens the livelong night
  With her own unrivalled strains.

V.

'Twas there, when beneath the autumnal sun
  The ripe rustling corn was waving,
And the reaper, his labours now begun,
  The pitiless beams was braving,
I used with a holiday heart to stray,
  In the pride of conscious leisure,
To gather, so hidden till close of day,
  The slippery nuts at pleasure.

VI.

'Tis haply for these and a thousand things
  The oak of the forest near,
And thoughts which come thither on viewless wings,
  That its mossy scent is dear;
But the reasons of love are ever, I trow,
  Far easier felt than spoke;
So, if ye would better know mine, then go
  Yourselves to the mossy old oak.

XIV.

MORNING THOUGHTS.

Let me not leave my chamber heedlessly!
I go once more to mingle with my kind,
And ere again at nightfall I shall be
Returned hither, thoughts and words may find
From this unguarded heart a passage free
Into some kindred or confiding mind,
That haply thence through never-ending years
May reap the fruit of gladness or of tears:
Oh God! it is a thought to wake the soul!
And I would feel it in its mightiest power
Now, in the stillness of the morning hour,
That through this new-born day I may control
More watchfully each feeling of my heart,
And ponder well my words, ere they for aye depart.

XV.

LIGHT.

"Truly the light is sweet."—Eccles. xi. 7.

I.

WHO ever rose at dawn of day,
  And sought the hills with eager feet,
But as he looked abroad could say,
  "Truly the light is sweet?"

II.

Glowing around its radiant source,
  Waking with smiles amid the dew,
Or twinkling down the river's course,
  'Twas pleasant still to view.

III.

It is a gladsome traveller,
  Tho' afar from its own bright home,
So pure, 'tis happy anywhere,
  If it be free to roam.

IV.

Pleasant the thought, that still on earth,
  Where'er mid fallen things we stray,
Something is left of lofty birth
  To tend us on our way!

V.

'Tis sweet, when on the day of rest
  Light softly cheers the house of prayer,
And minds us of that Spirit blest,
  In costlier temples there.

VI.

Or, emblem also of the Lord,
  Whose mercies every morn are new,
'Tis sweet, when bending o'er the Word,
  To read the image true.

VII.

Sweet was the light to him of old,
  Who, touched by gentle hand divine,
Could first, his Saviour's form behold—
  Then, all around him shine.

VIII.

It was a vast and wondrous scene
  That burst upon his new-born sight;
And none could better tell, I ween,
  How beautiful is light!

IX.

Restor'd from sickness long and drear,
  The good man leaves his chamber dim;
And, glittering through a grateful tear,
  How sweet is light to him!

X.

Or, if his sickness close in death,
  Thrice sweet that purer light divine,
Which brightens with his parting breath,
  In Zion's courts to shine.

XI.

Ascended there, what glory springs
  Mid circling hosts his gaze to greet!
He bends—and breathes beneath his wings,*
  "Truly the light is sweet!"

XII.

It comes not from the orb of day,
  Shedding his golden beams abroad;
No moon reflects her silver ray—
  It is the Lamb of God! †

* Isa. vi. 2. † Rev. xxi. 23.

XVI.

RELICS OF EDEN.

I.

Ye who have felt the deep mysterious power
  Of nature's sweetest sounds, and fairest sights,
The joyous lark at morn or evening hour;
  The dainty butterfly that gently lights
To sip the nectar from the opening flower,
  As each with gold or silver cup invites;
The purple hills above, the vale below,
Where the ripe wheat, and scarlet poppies grow;—

II.

Ye who have listened to the whispering trees,
  And secrets heard which you would fain reveal,
But can no more than you could paint the breeze
  That waked their converse—ye who deeply feel
The happiness of rural sheltered peace,
  Walking with Him who ever loves to heal
The lowly heart that seeks not lofty things,
But still to home and sacred quiet clings;—

III.

Oh! trace ye not in your exhaustless source
  Of pleasure from the things thus scattered round,
Something which 'minds, with monitory force,
  Of vernal joys in Eden's hallowed bound,
Ere all became disordered, "out of course,"*
  While man yet tilled the fruitful, flow'ry ground,
And walked with God, and knew and sought no bliss
Save what he felt—that nature's God was his?

* Psalm lxxxii. 5.

IV.

The bosom could not know the calm delight,
  Which nature yields as from a thousand springs,
Were nought within that answered her, despite
  Of all that cumbering and polluting clings:
It were in vain to strike the lyre aright,
  Were there not music sleeping in the strings;
And every strain that art can thence unwind,
But speaks the end which he who formed designed.

V.

To walk with nature's God, and trace his skill
  And love in all that he has spread around;
Thence to draw ceaseless pleasure, and fulfil
  The sacred task—yea taste the bliss profound
Of praising and adoring Him, and still
  New glories trace, and with new praise abound;—
For this in Eden's pure and calm abode
Was man first placed, when heaven pronounced
  him "good."

VI.

Eden is lost! but oh! unbounded love
  Of Him who formed us for that garden fair!
If justice thence the rebel creature drove,
  It hath not doomed him to deserved despair:
There is another paradise above,
  And mercy calls, and fain would lead him there:
It points to fruits celestial that grow
Lovelier than all that ever lured below.

VII.

Fruits unforbidden—fruits which all who will,
  Need but the hand of faith to freely take:
Oh! when we feel our bosoms sweetly thrill
  With nature's beauties here—when we awake
At morn to gaze on all that love and skill
  Have thrown around us, or at eve partake
Of the calm glories of the earth and sky,—
Let faith through all a brighter world descry.

VIII.

Tasting the relics of our earliest joys,
  At moments rare, snatched from the din of life,
Turn not our hearts from these to gilded toys,
  Fit but for children—and with childish strife
Won—and then played with till enjoyment cloys;
  But, still aspiring to the regions rife
With glories at the best but shadowed here,
Let nature's fairest things as shadows still be dear.

XVII.

THE VOICE WITHIN.

"Quench not the Spirit."—1 Thess. v. 19.

I.

Down to whatever depths of sin
  Hath been thy reckless course,
If still thou hear a voice within,
  Oh! trace it to its source!

II.

It comes from the eternal fount
  Of pity for distress;
And fain would lead thee to the mount
  Of Calvary, and bless.

III.

If God had yet forsaken thee,
  That voice had ceased to speak;
He would not call to waken thee,
  Did he no longer seek.

IV.

Then know Him gracious as He is,
  And quit the fatal path:
No voice inviting thee to bliss
  Were yet a voice of wrath.

V.

Think not of God as armed alone,
  His vengeance to fulfil;
But telling thee in gentle tone—
  He is a Father still.

VI.

Our fallen sire in Eden heard
  His voice, and, filled with dread,
He pictured Him a *Judge*, and, stirred
  With pangs of conscience, fled.

VII.

The prodigal, mid wants and fears,
  Remembered he had spurned
A loving *Father*—and, in tears
  Of penitence, returned.

VIII.

Oh! thou hast been the prodigal,
  In riot and excess:
Like him too hear a Father's call,
  And mercy yet shall bless.

XVIII.

SONGS NOT FOR SADNESS.

I.

I do not love a lay that tells
  A long, unvaried tale of grief:
The heavy chime of muffled bells
    Should aye be brief.

II.

'Tis better tell in sighs than songs—
  If they must needs be told at all—
The pains, and sorrows, wants, and wrongs,
    That each befal.

III.

The world but little cares, I ween,
  To hear the minstrel's tuneful moan :
Enough they think to bear the spleen
    That is their own.

IV.

They love far more to hear a lay
  Which speaks not of another's cares ;
But with sweet music takes away
    Or lessens their's.

V.

A song should be when hearts beat high
  With joy, not sink opprest with sadness :
Who silent in their troubles lie
    Best sing in gladness.

VI.

The merry lark may have his time
  Of want and sorrow—none can doubt it ;
But then he does not mount sublime,
    And sing about it.

VII.

No, little diamond edition
  Of nature's sweetest, blithest ditty!
He dreams not of the poor ambition
    Of winning pity!

VIII.

Still as a bee mid winter snows
  On dreary days the songster lies;
But when his gladness overflows,
    It fills the skies.

IX.

He soars on high, and all may see
  He soars to sing, and sings to bless;
And not to pour forth melody
    In heaviness.

X.

If when he mounts, his gladsome strain
  Should please the world below, and move them
With joy, 'tis well—if not, 'tis plain
    He's far above them.

XI.

It grieves not him, light-hearted elf,
  If some won't heed his music—still,
He warbles on to please himself,
    And those who will.

XII.

Such ways I love, thou minstrel gay!
  I'll sing with thee in sunny weather;
And when there comes a gloomy day,
    We'll rest together.

XVIII.

THE MEEK FORGIVING SAVIOUR.

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."—MATT. xxvi. 41.

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—Luke xxiii. 34.

I.

THERE are who kindly in their hours of gladness
  Shed joy around,
Yet harsh and angry in the day of sadness
  To all are found:
Like flowers that healthful odours in the light
Breathe sweetly forth, and yet are noxious in the
    night.

II.

And there be too a large unhappy number
  That good return;
But wake, if wrong'd, like lions from their slumber,
  And fiercely burn:
Giving what heaven approves as great the name
Of abject, craven, base,—and glorying in their
    shame.

III.

How few that ever in their hours of sorrow
  Delight to view,
The source of all; and from that sun to borrow
  A rainbow hue:
Smiling, while yet the dark cloud hangs above,
And haply tears will fall, with tearful smiles of love!

IV.

How few that, tender sympathy expecting
  In gloom and dread,
Turn to their dearest friends, and there detecting
  Dull sleep instead,
Remember still how poor, how frail is man;
And ever make for all the best excuse they can!

V.

Still fewer they, who, when their hands have lavished
Their choicest good,
Meet scorn and hate, instead of bosoms ravished
With gratitude,
Freely forgive, as being taught of heaven
How vain were else the hope themselves would be forgiven.

VI.

And where, oh! where, amid the hosts displaying
The cross, are those,
Who, scorned and mocked, and basely wronged, are praying
For bitt'rest foes
While yet before them, and with pitying glance
Striving to bury still their sins in ignorance?

VII.

Saviour adored! no tongue can tell thy glory,
In heaven or earth!
We read, we mark, we ponder deep the story,
Of priceless worth;

But, fading like the spangles of the night
Before the blaze of day, our minds are lost in light!

VIII.

Though ever weak the emblem thou hast given,
  To teach thy power,
Methinks, when sinking in the western heaven
  At evening hour,
He best proclaims the glory of thy face,
That richest, loveliest seems, when in the lowest
    place.

IX.

Pardoning thy friends forgetful in the garden
  Of thee forlorn!
Praying upon the cross for foes that harden
  Their hearts in scorn!
Finding for each the one, the only plea,
That even thy divine, all-searching eye could see!—

X.

Oh! never yet the angels that attending
  Before thee bow,

Beheld more wondrous hues of glory blending
  Around thy brow,
Than when, as if condensed into a span,
They thus saw boundless love *—a meek, forgiving
    man!

XI.

And shall we think, oh, Lord, to dwell for ever
  With thee on high;
And yet to trace thy holy footsteps never
    Sincerely try?
Far be the baseless hope from all who dare
The sacred name and garb of followers to wear!

XII.

Pour down more largely on thy Church a spirit
  Of meekest love;
That all below aspiring to inherit
  A home above,
May ever from their hearts the worst forgive,
And with the best in peace and sweet communion
    live.

* "God is love."—1 John iv. 16.

XIII.

Impart to each the skill, so rare and lovely,
  To make for all
The best excuse he may, and never roughly
  Their frailties call :
Remembering well how vain our hope of bliss,
Wert thou extreme to mark the things we do amiss.

XIX.

THE LARK.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come."—CANT. ii. 11, 12.

I.

Yon laverock merrily soars on high!
  Will he leave the bright earth for ever?
Or thinks he such rapturous melody
Can only be fit for the clear blue sky,
  Where sorrow and sighing are never?

II.

He is gone—Ah no! for against yon light
  Cloud of silver I see him yet;
And still he is winging his upward flight
To the realms where the stars will be at night,
  When the sun he so loves is set.

III.

And now, had you watch'd, you might see him lie
On the cloud as it sails along;
But vain were the search of the gazer's eye,
Unless it had follow'd him through the sky,
And his mate can scarce hear his song.

IV.

But lo! he descends to the earth again;
And he comes with his own sweet notes;
Tho' slower and gentler is now the strain
Than when he so joyously left the plain;
And now on the breeze he floats.

V.

And faintlier—faintlier yet still he sings;
It is scarcely the voice of mirth;
For, hovering there with expanded wings,
He looks upon numberless mournful things,
And—ah! he is fallen to earth!

VI.

In silence he lies! but he teaches there,
  Hardly less than on joyous wing:
Soar upward my soul from each earthly care,
And with anthems of melody fill the air,
  But, descended—oh, cease to sing!

VII.

Yes cease—for on earth there are hidden snares;
  Thou art safe but in open sky;
The fowler may capture thee unawares,
Unless thou art watching, with many prayers
  To that God who will hear thy cry. *

VIII.

Yet still of the minstrel of morning learn,
  And again and again ascend,
Till thy wing shall gain strength and bosom burn
For a height whence thou never may'st more
    return,—
  And thy flight in the skies shall end.

* Psalm xci. 3.

XX.

SONNET.

Suggested by a Vase of Flowers.

How fair must be the flowers of Paradise,
Earth's to surpass in beauty !—With what skill
Must Heaven have formed and blent their wondrous dyes,
When upon these the eye can gaze until
All is a dream of loveliness ; and still
With every closer gaze, new beauties rise,
Anew to please, to charm, and with surprise,
Devout as deep, to animate and fill !
Oh ! for a seraph's wings to flee away !
To mount, and bathe in beauty and in love—
Love as it glows beneath a heavenly ray,
And beauty as it blooms in climes above :
To dwell where God that decks the earth with flowers,
Himself for ever dwells amid celestial bowers !

XXI.

UNITY.

"Holy Father! keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are."—John xvii. 11.

I.

Oh! what should be ever the wish and the prayer
By piety breathed in her closet alone,
When sighing to think what divisions are there,
Where Christ prayed that all should be lovingly one?

II.

That the heavenly pages, the word of the Lord,
May still be more honoured, and humbly perused,
And the heavenly light that illumines the word,
May still be more brightly and widely diffused.

III.

As children alike of one Father above,
  The voice of one Father must teach us, and guide,
Or surely, whatever our lips may approve,
  Dividing our homage, our hearts will divide.

IV.

As sinners who trust in one Saviour that shed
  His blood to redeem us, our pleasure should be,
To love and obey Him; and hath He not said,
  'Go search ye the scriptures, they witness of me?'

V.

As temples alike of one Spirit that dwells
  In all who draw near to their God thro' the Son.
Oh! should we not listen to Him when He tells,
  Our Master, our Saviour, our Teacher are one?

XXII.

TO A
REDBREAST SINGING IN WINTER.

I.

A LITTLE pleases *thee*, thou songster gay!
While all is cold and cheerless on the ground,
Enough that thou canst flit from spray to spray,
And shed thy trilling melodies around.

II.

Methinks the crimson colour of thy breast
Well speaks the fervour of the heart it bears:
Thou carest not for winter's snowy vest,
Or deemest praise a remedy for cares.

III.

Thy grateful gladness even for scanty food
  Seems as it warmed thee spite of frost and snow ;
And so while others o'er their sorrows brood,
  Thy voice is blithe, tho' it must needs be low.

IV.

Full many have learnt of thee, and so would I :
  Unmurmuring would I pass my changeful days
Each good increasing by a grateful eye,
  Each ill abating by a song of praise.

V.

I would not cloud the present with the past,
  Nor borrow shadows from a future sky :
'Tis in the present that my lot is cast,
  And ever will be through eternity.

VI.

'Sufficient to the day the present ill,'
  Was kindly taught us by a heavenly voice,
And one inspired to tell his Master's will,
  Hath bid us 'alway in the Lord rejoice.'

VII.

Lord, I obey—in Thee rejoicing now,
  Rejoicing to believe—to feel Thee here,
Blessing the Robin 'mid the winter's snow,
  And me well pleased his carolling to hear.

XXIII.

THE CHRISTIAN COURSE.

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."—Isaiah xxx. 15.

I.

WHERE first upon the mountain's side
The sparkling fountain wells,
With music sweet—an infant tide—
It ripples, sinks, and swells.

II.

And swiftly with its varying song,
And ever mirthful play,
'Twixt frowning rocks it speeds along
Upon its downward way.

III.

And yet the mountain's side is bare,
  And parch'd with summer's heat,
While many a sheep that wanders there
  Seems languidly to bleat.

IV.

The little stream alone looks glad,
  Save here and there a flower
Upon its brink—all else is sad,
  And thirsting for a shower.

V.

Ah! why, since waters glide so near,
  And so unceasing glide,
Should all around look spent and sere
  Upon the mountain's side?

VI.

It is because the new-born stream
  Too swiftly passes by,
While still descends the burning beam
  Unsparing from the sky.

VII.

It seems as 'twere too full of mirth
  To pause upon its way,
Or think of aught beside on earth
  Except itself at play.

VIII.

But see, where yonder meadows bloom,
  And all looks fresh and green,
And many a lark with soaring plume
  Sings in the blue serene:

IX.

The stream is there far wider grown,
  And flows so smooth and still,
And deep withal, t'were hardly known
  To be the mountain rill.

X.

Yet 'tis the same, and yonder vale
  So smiles on either side;
Because with glad though whispering tale
  Its waters slowly glide.

XI.

And farther than the eye can reach
It onward calmly flows;
And even to the ocean beach
It blesses as it goes.

XII.

Nor ceases there—ah! no; for now,
With music deep and loud,
As o'er it stately vessels plough,
With pennons waving proud;—

XIII.

It sings its everlasting song
Of praise to God on high,
And scatters good untold among
The nations far and nigh.—

XIV.

An emblem here methinks is seen
By fancy's dreamy gaze,
Of something higher far, I ween—
The Christian's life of praise.

XV.

When first the joyful sound is heard
  Of heaven's all-pardoning grace,
Through Calvary's blood, and that glad word
  The soul can firm embrace,—

XVI.

Embrace as would the seaman wrecked
  Cling to the solid rock,
While waves their foaming heads erect,
  And pealing thunders shock,—

XVII.

The sudden, thrilling ecstacy
  Is like the new-born rill,
When, hastening down the mountain high,
  It cannot yet be still.

XVIII.

New hopes are felt, new scenes descried,
  Still bright as faith is strong,
Till oft the bosom cannot hide
  Its joy, but vents in song.

XIX.

But human hearts were never made
  For long tumultuous gladness;
They need, like flowers, the peaceful shade,
  Or joy gives place to sadness.

XX.

And He who formed them too designed
  The holy brotherhood
Their highest happiness should find
  In calmly doing good.

XXI.

Peace, peace was the sublime bequest
  The dying Saviour made;
And peace would ever make her nest
  Deep in the sheltered glade.

XXII.

Or, like the river in the vale
  So calm for many a mile,
She loves to tell her grateful tale,
  And do her work the while.

XXIII.

'Tis thus the follower of the Lord,
When sinks his rapturous joy,
Discerns and tastes the sweet accord
'Twixt pleasure and employ.

XXIV.

His heaven-born happiness is found
A deep and sacred thing,
Which loves to shed that good around
The Saviour died to bring.

XXV.

He learns, and by experience knows,
That wisdom's voice is true,—
'Who watereth others as he goes,
Himself is watered too.'

XXVI.

If haply ever and anon
Opposed, like yonder river,
He turns aside—but then goes on
As peacefully as ever.

XXVII.

Or oft he passes over much
  That fain would wake his wrath,
As if unseen—accounting such
  Both love's and wisdom's path.

XXVIII.

And thus, unlike the rivulet
  That just has left the fount,
He shows to few that he has met
  With hindrance to surmount.

XXIX.

What once had kindled anger loud
  As sound of dashing spray,
Is only pitied, and allowed
  To move his heart—to pray.

XXX.

His peace is far too deep and wide
  For little rocks and shelves
The stream to ruffle or divide,
  However chafed themselves.

XXXI.

And thus he on and onward goes
  Upon his pleasant way
To where the boundless ocean flows
  Of everlasting day.

XXXII.

There entering, he lifts his voice
  Of praise to God on high,
While angels welcome, and rejoice
  To hear that melody.

XXXIII.

'Tis childhood's song matured, complete;
  It is the infant rill,
Expanded where the waters meet
  That flow from Zion's hill.

XXIV.

THE SAVIOUR AT THE DOOR.

"Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. iii. 20.

1.

WERT thou but going to some land remote,
  To spend the evening of thy life, and die,
Would not some visions in thy fancy float
  Of all that round thy distant home might lie?
Whether the image might be false or true,
Would it not often meet thy willing view?

II.

If from that land some traveller should come,
  Who knew its fields, its rivers, and its skies,
The dwellers there, and even the very home
  Prepared for thee, and soon to greet thine eyes,
Would'st thou not gladly welcome him beside
Thine hearth, and there constrain him to abide?

III.

Methinks the hours would all too quickly fleet—
  Midnight might find you there in converse still:
The cottage with its porch, the garden seat,
  The stream that winded near, the distant hill—
All that to other ears were like a tale
Repeated till it palled would thine regale.

IV.

And often at thy board that guest might find
  A welcome, whether in thy joy or pain;
His very form and voice would be entwined
  With the far home beyond the swelling main;
Until the vessel, bearing thee away
With streaming pennons, clove the dashing spray.

V.

'Twere thus for earth—for that brief evening time,
  Which thou mayst never see—or if thou dost,
Will just as surely as thy morning prime,
  The more 'tis trusted in, betray thy trust:
'Tis not in season, nor in place to bless—
The deathless soul asks loftier happiness.

VI.

Nay, could'st thou find at eve beyond the main,
  In that calm nest thy fancy might portray,
The quiet comfort sought as yet in vain,
  While heedless of a brighter, happier day—
No heavier curse could fall upon thine head,
Ere the night close, and light and hope be fled.

VII.

Now hearken yet!—whether thou wouldst or not,
  By day, by night, on ocean, or on shore,
Thou'rt swiftly journeying to a land remote
  No eye but one is able to explore
Through all its bounds—One, only One, can tell
The bliss supreme of Heaven—the woes profound
    of Hell.

VIII.

And He is at thy door!—a heavenly guest,
  He asks admission to a house of clay!
His very entrance will secure thee rest;
  And though till now thy rapid, reckless way
Have been the course to everlasting night,
His hand will guide to never-ending light.

IX.

Open thy door—oh! hark! He knocks and waits!
  It is a gentle sound; but thou canst hear—
He knocks again!—as at the eternal gates
  A soul might knock that sought admission there!
Wilt thou refuse?—Oh! rather let thine heart
Burst in thy panting breast, than he should yet
  depart!

X.

Admit him, and his voice shall sweetly tell
  Of scenes afar, and of a home for thee:
A home in Heaven—a home he knoweth well;
  For his hand reared it—and lest thou shouldst be
Shut out—oh! truth for angels to proclaim!—
Redeemed, when lost by thee—with bleeding dying
    frame!

XI.

Canst thou refuse? More wise for earth than Heaven,
  Wouldst thou invite the mortal traveller,
Yet close thy door 'gainst Him to whom 'tis given
  To bless on earth, and blessing guide thee where
Thou shalt not spend thine evening time, and die—
But endless morn—a bright eternity?

XII.

Mortal, arise!—Throw wide to that great guest
  The portals of thine heart—let nothing stay—
Nor friend, nor foe, nor idol in thy breast—
  Let every bar be shivered as the spray
The vessel dashes from her as she rides
Into the haven calm from out the roaring tides.

XIII.

Then who shall tell the peace that thou shalt know?
  That guest received shall willingly abide;
Himself shall spread a heavenly feast, and thou,
  Like John, partake of viands at his side,
Which whoso eats and drinks no more shall feel
Hunger, or thirst, or pain—but everlasting weal.

XXV.

PRAYER FOR HOLINESS.

"Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me."—Psalm li. 10.

I.

Oh, that in every word, and thought, and deed,
  Almighty Father, I could live to thee!
Oh, that from sin's dark thrall for ever freed,
This heart could mere anticipate the meed
  It hopes to reap throughout eternity.

II.

I would be pure as Thou, O God, art pure,
  And serve thee with an ever fervent love;
Not in the hope to purchase life—secure
In Christ alone, whose plighted word is sure,
  Though the hills shake, and earth's foundations
    move.

III.

But, because thou art holy, and thine eye
  Doth hate iniquity, although it spare;
Because the ransomed of the Lord should die
To all that pierced their Lord on Calvary;
  And so grow meet for heaven, whose home is
    there.

IV.

But I am weak, and sinful, Lord, as weak;
  To-day's resolve to-morrow melts away;
I need thy help, and yet I cannot seek,
Unless thy Spirit in my bosom speak,*
  Revealing first my wants—then how to pray.

V.

What can I plead with thee? If want can move—
  Ah! no—my wants are sinful as their source!
Like the starved prodigal's they only prove
The guilt of fleeing from a home of love,
  And seeking pleasure in a rebel course.

* Romans viii. 26.

VI.

What can I plead with thee?—A contrite path
  Through the dark pilgrimage of future years?
If the poor mourner give thee all he hath,
Wilt thou not stay thy too deserved wrath,
  And grant the prayer of penitential tears?

VII.

Father, forgive!—Sin stains my very woe:
  Could tears avail, no need of Calvary's blood;
Or that, once slain, my risen Lord should go,
A wounded Lamb, to heaven's high courts, and show
  The pierced side whence streamed the healing flood.

VIII.

Jesus, I trust in thee!—that boundless grace,
  Which prompted thee to bear the sinner's part,
Now moves thee still, before thy Father's face
To plead his cause:—so in thy hands I place
  This prayer for holiness of life and heart.

XXVI.

PLAYING WITH POESY.

I.

WHO plays with poesy had need beware:
  The tenderest flower that blooms in sheltered vale,
The frailest wing that fans the summer air,
  The lightest gossamer that in the gale
Waves on an autumn morn,—can scarcely be
By one rude touch so marred as fairy poesy.

II.

In native beauty, 'tis all loveliness;
  By nice art cultured, it is still the same;
Fitted to soothe, to captivate, to bless
  The weary heart, and elevate its aim
Above the shadows of the earth and time,
To pure and lofty things—to all that is sublime.

III.

But when 'tis deemed a child of art alone,
  And science fancies she can weave a song;
Or gentle youths beneath the quiet moon,
  Dream 'tis the wild child of the loving throng;
Oh! then, of all the ill-used things that be
Nought is so deeply wronged as fairy poesy.

IV.

Even when native taste, and polished art
  Unite to form their high-born melody,
How trivial the error that shall thwart
  Their brightest efforts!—till the strain shall be
A theme for pity, or contempt, or scorn,
That else were far from each as woodland songs at morn.

V.

One bold conception with too bold a flight,
  One image forced beyond its proper bound,
One chord in place or time not struck aright,
  One thought that verges toward forbidden ground,—

May mar the whole ; like vulgar glance or air
In one who else were deemed a creature passing
fair.

VI.

Shall I then throw my humble harp aside,
As claiming neither native gift, nor skill
From practice won?—No; I will rather hide
Where the stream winds unheard beneath the hill,
Singing alone all through the tangled grove,
And with it blend the notes I blush to own I love.

VII.

I ask no praises from the listening throng ;
I grant, ere censured, more than they will say;
Rarely I try to reach a lofty song ;
And in my simplest, least aspiring lay
Fail of my purpose : 'tis at best a strain,
Which the same heart that pours, confesses poor
and vain.

VIII.

Would it were worthier ! fitter for the ear
Of Him whose praises it would gladly tell !

Would that like holy anthems, deep and clear,
  It spake the feelings which the bosom swell!
Then lovelier far, and dearer still to me
Would be the notes which then were sweetest poesy.

XXVII.

TO A WOOD ANEMONE.

I.

DELICATE blossom of the lonely wood,
  Gracefully drooping by this mossy seat
Which I have chosen for its solitude,
  Why art thou blooming in this still retreat?
No mortal eye save mine hath ever seen
Thy snowy whiteness, blent with gold and green;
And haply none will see;—few care to roam
So far within these shades as thy sequestered home.

II.

Why bloom'st thou here? the stockdove brooding
nigh
With her oft told, but never wearying tale,
Ne'er bent methinks on thee a loving eye;
Nor did thy quiet beauty e'er regale
One native ranger here by night or day;
And so, when thy sweet life hath past away,
T'will be to all, fair floweret of the wood,
As thou hadst never been, to deck this solitude.

III.

Ah no! albeit that I may not scan
All that is hidden in a woodland flower,
It shall not be, I ween, as thy brief span
Of life had never been:—with gentle power
I feel the mystery that envelopes thee
Teaching my spirit now humility,
And gratitude to Him whose wisdom knows
Alike to instruct and please with lowliest flower
that blows.

IV.

And so, if I can learn that lesson well,
  And bear it in my heart, and still retain,
Then, simple flower, what mortal tongue shall tell
  How far wert thou from having bloomed in vain!
Be it no eye hath gazed on thee but mine—
And now thou fade and die—thro' love divine,
Thou wilt have taught a lesson unto me,
That first shall bless through time—then through
    eternity.

XXVIII.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

"Be strong and of good courage; fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."—Deut. xxxi. 6.

The skilled in battle-fields full well have learned
How courage nerves the soldier for the fight,
And earthly laurels ever best are earned
By those who doubt not victory, in spite
Of fierce and mighty foes; but bravely stand,
With eye unflinching, and untrembling hand;
Bent on one purpose—firm resolved to win
Thro' bristling spear, and flying javelin.

II.

And he who reads of Jesse's son should know,
  That strength to fight is in the warrior's breast;
That weakest weapons shall defeat the foe,
  Hurled by the valiant that confiding rest,
Not on their armour, or their skill to wield,
Not on the hope the foe will quit the field,
But on a righteous cause and faithful word,
The cause of truth—the promise of the Lord.

III.

Courage! ye soldiers of the cross! be strong!
  'Quit you like men,' and lift your banners high!
Above the din of war even now the song
  The listening ear may catch of victory;
The song of angel witnesses around,
And soldiers with the wreath of triumph crown'd:
On, Christians, on! tho' mingled with the slain,
Ye *cannot* lose if faithful—death were gain!

XXIX.

NATURE'S WARNING.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."—Isaiah viii. 20

I.

PAST is the harvest, and the summer ended;
Autumn hath gently laid upon the scene
Her vest of many hues, so softly blended,
You scarce can sigh for summer's robe of green.

II.

You could not, but that now the rising breeze
Strives to lay bare what is so richly clad;
And soon will sing a dirge above the trees,
Lifting their naked arms, all cold and sad.

III.

And then will come the wild and howling blast,
  Sweeping o'er forests erst so proudly dight;
And then—a dull and heavy cloud will cast
  O'er all the scene one winding-sheet of white.

IV.

Mortal, awake!—a voice in harvest warned—
  "What thy hand soweth, it shall also reap:" *
Now speak the fading leaves—if they be scorned,
  Who knows that thou shalt see the *withered* heap?

V.

Thou may'st be hidden "out of sight," † ere they
  Be lying on the ground 'mid winter's gloom;
And some thou gazest on may yet decay
  On the green turf above thy silent tomb.

* Gal. vi. 7.

† "Give me possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."—Gen. iii. 4.

VI.

Fall where they will, and lie—it matters not:
No future spring shall wake them from the dust;
But thou must rise, submissive to the lot
The Lord shall give thee—and the Lord is just.

VII.

Mortal, awake! One harvest more is near,
With other reapers than have met thy sight:
O! ere it come, this voice of mercy hear,
"Rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

VIII.

Light to perceive what darkness is around;
Light to inspect thine own polluted breast;
Light to admire the Saviour thou hast found;
And then, the light of heaven, thy place of rest.

XXX.

CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA.

"And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear."—Matt. xiv. 25, 26.

I.

Why sink the hands, as childhood weak,
Why fixed the eye, and pale the cheek,
Telling too plainly how the breast
With sudden terror is opprest?
Falls the red bolt with dreadful sound
  Of thunder in the heavens pealing?
Or open wide the waves around,
  As if a yawning grave revealing?

II.

Ah! no—upon the troubled tides
The form as of a mortal glides :—
But waves support not flesh and blood
It is a spirit o'er the flood,
Wearing a human shape and guise,
  But coming not from human dwelling;
If not a native of the skies,
  Yet of unearthly regions telling.

III.

But why before a shadow quail,
Whate'er of real be the tale
It tells of things above the reach
Of mortal thought or mortal speech?
No spirit ever quailed before
  The gaze or arm of fleshly being :
Then why should mortal man be sore
  Afraid at thus a spirit seeing?

IV.

Why not descended from above,
With tidings or design of love,

That form so calm upon the waves,
While all around the tempest raves?
No look of wrath is on that brow;
  No words of wrath those lips have spoken;
Whatever dread the gazers know,
  Of peace alone they see the token.

V.

Oh! human fear, at sight of ought *
That wakens vividly the thought
Of viewless power close around,
Yet baffling all attempts to sound—
How plainly may the searching eye,
  Illumined by the lamp from Heaven,
In thee the dreadful truth descry,
  That man is from his Maker riven!

VI.

Time was a spirit had been hailed
With voice and look of joy—nor failed
A welcome full of love to meet
In man's all peaceful blest retreat:

* Luke i. 12; ii. 9.

That time is past—"the gold is dim!"*
  Its beauty gone—nor left a relic!
Who once had smiled on Seraphim
  Now dares not *look* on form angelic!

VII.

"What is it, sin, that thou hast done?"
What tides of ill for ever run
From thee! we feel thee in the breast,
And therefore shun even spirit blest;
Because we cannot choose but fear,
  At sight of all our search defying,
Which tells of mighty power near,
  That evil in our path is lying.

VIII.

But little need for fear had they,
Who now beheld at early day
No spirit, as they deemed, but one
Their eyes should joy to look upon:

* Lamentations iv. 1.

There walked upon the troubled sea
  Not even the form of earthly stranger:
'Tis their incarnate God they see—
  Their "very present help" in danger.

IX.

'Tis He who when He pleaseth rides
In chariot of the winds or tides:
Who when He will can make the wave
Stand fixed and be "a wall" to save;
Or flowing on, yet firm sustain,
  As now, the Lord who gave it being;
That they who feared the hurricane
  Might fear no more—their helper seeing.

X.

But man first dreads his present ill;
And then, when matchless love and skill
Unite to lend the help he needs,
Still greater cause for terror reads:

Nay, oft he kneels him down in prayer,
  To ask the gracious aid of Heaven,
And murmurs most, or in despair
  Is lost, when what he asks is given.

XI.

How do we always need a voice
To say, "Tis I"—and bid rejoice!
We take the blessing for the rod,
And are "afraid to look on God:"*
We call on Him with fervent cry
  And yet—so prone to doubt Him ever—
We fancy greatest danger nigh,
  When He approaches to deliver.

XII.

Lord, give us grace to better learn
How wise thy love; and well discern
What most to wish—what most to dread:
And when our prayer or want hath sped

* Exod. iii. 6.

To Thee and brought a blessing down—
  Oh! give us ever eyes perceiving
Its nature true—and hearts to own
  That all is good to the believing.

XIII.

When rises the tempestuous wave,
Oh! hasten still thine own to save!
At morn or eve, by night or day,
Come down, though gone above to pray:
We need indeed thy voice on high,
  But here not less thine arm sustaining,—
And ever still those words—"Tis I"—
  Lest love be answered by complaining.

XXXI.

LOSE NOT THE PRESENT.

I.

Lose not the present, pilgrim of the skies :
  Be just as happy as thou mayst, and *now :*
Take eagerly of pleasures as they rise :
  Let others wait for time, but wait not thou.

II.

Heap all thou canst within the passing hour :
  Be prodigal, and take thy fill of joy :
Spare nought thou hast, and of the future's dower
  Take all thou canst—to-morrow thou mayst die.

III.

Only—be careful that thy joys be true :
  Choose sterling gold : the counterfeit, the dross,
That glitters only to deceive, eschew,
  As worse than worthless—gain were in its loss.

IV.

Nor waste on travel—lavish all at home :
  Dream not a strange and foreign clime bestows
The sweet delights, the quiet joys that come
  To those that seek them—*in their Father's house.*

V.

Wandering were loss of all, both wealth and time ;
  It were to go and leave thy gold behind ;
To quit thine home, and in a distant clime
  Seek calm content—and desolation find.

VI.

Enough that God his promise sure hath given
  To dwell with them who love him and obey ;
For God, if present, makes a present heaven,
  While fitting for a future brighter day.

VII.

Then lose not thou in sighs the passing hour :
  Only be faithful to thy Saviour's voice :
Believe, and love, and do with all thy power
  What love would prompt—and in the Lord
    rejoice.

VIII.

Rejoice, I say again—yea, "shout," and sing!
  Let others wait for time, but wait not thou;
Ever to God, and godly pleasures cling,
  And then be happy as thou canst—and *now*.

XXXII.

AN INFANT'S SMILE.

I.

How sweet the smile of infancy,
  Waked by a mother's smile;
Love answering love, and fraught with glee
  So innocent the while!

II.

If there be beauty upon earth,
  Or light beneath the sky,
It sparkles in an infant's mirth
  Watched by a mother's eye.

III.

And shall that beauty fade away—
  That light be quenched for ever?
Fond parent! love's own accents say,
  In silent glances—"never!"

IV.

Then tend it, as thou would'st a flower
  To thee from Eden given ;
And still sustain its living power
  With light invoked from heaven.

V.

That smile, so full of joy and love,
  Is scarce a thing of earth :
Fancy could deem it was above
  It had its primal birth ;—

VI.

And then within an earthly frame,
  Like dewdrop in the rose,
The glittering gem was set, and came
  To lighten mortal woes.

VII.

But be it of the earth or sky,
  It will not long abide,
Unless 'tis cherish'd from on high,
  And with fresh life supplied.

VIII.

Like all the loveliest things we know,
  That bloom in fragrant vales,
Full soon will fade its living glow,
  If heaven's mild radiance fails.

IX.

Where now it plays, the look of care
  Shall be—or if a smile,
A smile that sorrow's self can wear,
  As 'twould itself beguile.

X.

Then watch it with a mother's eye,
  And with her prayer of love;
And though the earthly frame shall die,
  The gem shall live above!

XXXIII.

TO C——

I.

Amidst a rude cold world, 'tis sweet to feel,
  One gentle heart is fondly linked with ours;
Grieves in our woe, rejoices in our weal,
  And, if it *might*, would strew our path with flowers.

II.

But sweeter far it is to feel that He,
  To whom that heart in humble faith is given,
Is "touched" for both with tenderer sympathy,
  And, as He *can*, illumes our path from heaven.

III.

Oh Thou, the fountain of all holy love!
  Grant that, however dear be ought below,
Far dearer still may be the source above,
  Than even the fairest streams that thence can flow.

XXXIV.

TO C. F. D.

I.

As one receiving some rare tender flower,
  That he might bear it to a distant land,
Pleased with his charge, yet mindful of the hour
  Of storms and frosts, might take with trembling
    hand,—
So now, my first-born daughter, while I fold
  Thine infant form with gladness on my bosom,
It is with gladness, trembling to behold,
  Consigned to these frail hands, so frail a blossom.

II.

Yet, have I seen on childhood's bosom sleeping,
  A tender infant, that was safe I knew;
Because a parent fond sate near them, keeping
  Each little one alike in reach and view:
So I, my babe, will minister to thee,
  Fearless of harm, whatever storm may gather;
Because above, the eye of faith can see,
  Guarding us both, a loving, watchful Father.

III.

A Father—and a God! Oh, wondrous blending
  Of majesty and tenderness supreme!
Inspiring deepest awe, yet ever lending,
  To win us and assure, a gentle gleam:
Even, as when his mighty voice above,
  'Mid the dark cloud that shadows us, is pealing,
The bow of promise too its tale of love
  In hues of softest beauty is revealing.

IV.

As coming years shall bring their wondrous visions,
  Both to thine outward and thy mental eye,

Of love divine, yet mingling still monitions
    Of dread unutterable majesty,—
Oh! may'st thou love, my child, thy Father's God,
  And, sweetly conscious of His sure protection,
Joy in the light His presence sheds abroad—
  But aye with reverence deep as thine affection.

XXXV.

ODOURS.

I.

Oh, the bean-field in blossom, the mown grass, the clover,
The dew-besprent rose from the hand that we love,
Breathe the sweetest of scents, if ye search the world over,
On hills, or in vallies, in garden, or grove.

II.

Like the stream from the mountain, how soft, but how mighty
Their influence to brighten, and gladden, and bless!
Say, ye who delight in such odours, delight ye
In aught else so much, save affection's caress?

III.

In aught else of the *earth?* for the spirit that soareth,
Knows something far higher, far sweeter to love:
'Tis the smile of approval from Him it adoreth—
The fragrance that breathes through the garden above.

IV.

Oh, thither then oft let the scent-laden breezes,
And hallowed fond whispers from creatures below,
Waft upward the soul, till Omnipotence pleases
That there, never more to return, it shall go.

XXXVI.

ENDURING JOY.

"I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."—Hab. iii. 18.

I.

This heart hath rapturous feelings known
From sunny things of earth;
But aye, like music's sweetest tone,
They perished in their birth!

II.

Methought there ever came with such
A voice, a mystic breath,
Like fragrance from too rude a touch,
Telling the floweret's death.

III.

Joy, from the height to which I rose,
  So quickly changed to fears,
That not the lark, with pinions close,
  More swiftly disappears.

IV.

But I have found a joy that lives:
  Yet not from things of earth:
It is a viewless hand that gives;
  And 'tis of heavenly birth.

V.

Sweeter than music from the lyre,
  Or perfume from the flower,
It rises like the lark, but higher
  Than he has strength to tower.

VI.

And *often* too it soars above:
  But thence again it bends
Its course to earth: on wings of love
  It rises and descends.

VII.

Oh! rather He, from whom doth spring
  All love, all joy, all good—
Who gives the lark his buoyant wing,
  And man his "angels' food;"—

VIII.

He is its giver, author, source:
  Oh! for a seraph's hymn,
To tell to all, with winning force,
  What joy is found in Him!

XXXVII.

I WOULD NOT LIVE ALWAY.

Job vii. 16.

I.

I WOULD not live alway: 'tis said in the hour
When pleasure hath sated, or sorrow oppress:
The heart scarcely knowing what thing hath the power
To yield what it seeketh, yet seeketh for rest.

II.

I would not live alway: 'tis said in the night
By the sufferer tossing, and wearied, and worn
With pain to which darkness seems worse than the light;
And yet he looks hopelessly onward to morn.

III.

I would not live alway: O listen, ye gay!
And listen, ye victims of sorrow and pain!
'Tis the calm voice of faith and of love which can say,
I am happy in Christ, yet to die will be gain.

IV.

Would ye too as peacefully rest in the Lord?
Oh, call ye upon Him while yet He is nigh!
Confess Him, adore Him, confide in His word:
It will then be a blessing to live or to die.

V.

To live will be alway to love Him below,
And to see Him by faith from morning till even;
To die will but be to soar upward and go
To love Him, and see Him for ever in heaven.

XXXVIII.

THE THUNDER-STORM.

"He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. . . . . The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice."—Psalm xviii. 9, 13.

I.

HEAR ye the thunder pealing through the sky,
  As it would rend the dun dark vault above?
Be still!—and listen to that voice on high,
  Speaking, though solemnly, a Father's love!
It warns his wandering children to return,
And dread the wrath which they are wont to spurn:
It tells his loving ones no ill to fear;
That mighty voice denotes an arm Almighty near.

II.

An arm engaged to bless them and defend,
  And guide them safely on their heavenward way;
Nor leave them ever, till their journey end
  Amid the joys of that celestial day,
Before whose brightness even the forked gleam,
That ever and anon outshines the beam
Of noon, were lost; as are the stars of night,
When rises day's bright Lord with his surpassing light.

III.

How blest the gospel promise from the skies!
  Which, while it sheds a hue on every flower,
And decks each lovely scene with lovelier dyes,
  As the bright bow adorns the welcome shower,
Can soften nature in her sternest form,
And robe with beauty even the thunder-storm;
That else, whatever vaunting lips may say,
Can thrill the stoutest heart, if godless, with dismay.

IV.

A louder voice, and one more dread, is nigh!
  A gleam more vivid than the lightning's glare
Shall flash ere long on every mortal eye,
  And speak the Lord of glory "in the air!"
Oh! if thou dread the pealing tempest now,
Let its great voice awake thee!—humbly bow
Before the boundless power that it tells,
Ere on thy startled ear the last loud trumpet swells!

V.

Hear, while the thunder rolls above thine head,
  And viewless fingers write upon the cloud
What needs no heaven-taught skill ere it be read—
  Thy fears interpret the dread words aloud:—
They tell thee, thou art weighed, and wanting found!
But, hark!—the peal hath ceased—a still small sound
Breathes through the air, and would thine ear arrest—
"Come trembler unto me, and I will give thee rest."

VI.

Oh, seize this solemn interval of calm !
  Two voices call—two pages are unrolled :
But each would lead thee to that healing balm
  Which heaven hath purchased with a price untold,
That thou might'st freely take—Oh ! hear, and live !
While mercy warns, invites, and would forgive !
Hear, while the Saviour stands, and at thy door
Asks for admission sought so oft in vain before !

XXXIX.

GENTLENESS.

"Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."—2 Cor. x. 1.

A *gentle lamb* doth image Him who came
For man to sorrow on the earth, and die;
O'er Him the Spirit hovered, when the name
Of 'Son beloved' was uttered from on high,
As a *meek dove* descended from the sky;
Peace at his birth the angels did proclaim;
And at his death *peace* was his legacy:—
Oh, rightly prize and love then—ye who aim
Freely to reap what He would freely give—
The peace He left, the gentleness He showed;
Fruit of the love which in his bosom glowed;
And be it yours, by help divine to live,
As ye in spirit and in truth would prove
Worthy the name ye bear—children of peace and
love.

XL.

THE RACE SET BEFORE US.

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."—Heb. xii. 1, 2.

I.

LITTLE they know, I ween, the Christian race,
  Who deem the eternal prize with ease is won:
Their feet are rather in the eager chase
  For bright but withering crowns of earth—they run
For flowery wreaths, which, if they once embrace,
  That instant fade; as in the summer sun
The painted butterfly the child has grasped,
And marred and mangled as he fondly clasped.

II.

They have not tried themselves the narrow course,
With many watching them, but few to cheer;
And where their sudden fall would be the source
To godless men around of heartless jeer;
Unconscious of their bosom's keen remorse,
And reckless of their secret prayer and tear—
Ah! no—they run amidst a gazing crowd
That ever cheer them on, and often shout aloud.

III.

True Christian hearts can scarce be so deceived:
They know the prize is precious, and the toil
To win it great, even though oft relieved
With consciousness of high approving smile;—
And much they mourn to think how they have grieved
The heavenly dweller in their breast the while
He urged them onward to the destined goal,
And strengthened for the task their weary fainting soul.

IV.

The prize is precious!—oh, that every heart
  That knows not here the rest it pants to find,
Would practise well the high and sacred art
  Of soaring oft, this poor earth left behind,
To where a balm is found for every smart,
  And tenderest skill the broken heart to bind!
One look of faith in yonder peaceful home
Would chase the bitter tear, and gladness give for
    gloom.

V.

We do not soar enough—we creep below;
  As if the soul were wingless as the frame;
And hence we see not—nay, we do not know
  What heaven holds out above for mortal aim:
Content to *hear* that fruits immortal grow,
  Our wishes are but weak, our efforts tame—
Oh! would we learn to rise, our *fall* * might teach,
'Tis through the gazing eye the bosom pants to reach.

* "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was *pleasant to the eyes*, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat."—Gen. iii. 6.

VI.

We long for what we see—though haply time
  Have taught us oft 'tis but an idle glare;
A vision which at distance shows sublime;
  But, neared and grasped at, proves but empty air:
What then would be the energy to climb
  The steep of Zion, if the glories there—
Glories surpassing all our fondest dreams—
Shed oftener on the soul their life-inspiring beams?

VII.

'Tis said of those whom hostile hands compel
  To leave the springs, and seek the mountain height;
Lest, torn from home and all that flings its spell
  Around the heart, they feel the exquisite,
Unmeasured horrors without parallel
  In earthly climes—the cruel withering blight
Of toil for masters who have bought with gold
What heaven first made, and then redeemed with price untold;—

VIII.

'Tis said they bear through many a weary day
  What to be known by any heart must first
Be felt beneath the same unsparing ray
  Of Afric's sun—the agony of thirst;
Resolved even thus to slowly wear away,
  Rather than live for misery accurst;—
But ah! at length they near—and nearer come—
They see the proffered cup—and leave in chains
    their home! *

IX.

If sight thus lure to slavery below,
  How would it win to freedom in the skies!
If men be tempted thus to undergo
  The loss of home and all their bosoms prize,
How would these hearts with heavenly fervour glow
To gain their home—the mansion in the skies,
If faith would lift her eye with searching gaze,
To all that shines above this close surrounding
    haze!

* See "The African Slave-trade and its Remedy," by Sir T. Fowell Buxton.

X.

Ye who have formed your purpose, and are bent,
  Whate'er ye lose, the heavenly prize to gain—
Knowing the cost full well, yet well content
  To bear it all, nor rest till ye attain—
In this one work *be strong*—be *violent!* *
  Break, by the help of heaven, the cumbering chain
Of time and sense; and scan with stedfast eye,
What faith alone can see, the unfading joys on
    high!

XI.

Soar upward, and survey the streets of gold,
  Whose gates of pearl are open day and night;
Look on the dwellers there, and there behold,
  Greater than all, its everlasting light,
Whose wondrous beauty only shall be told,
  When words can compass what is infinite;—
Nor cease to gaze until the beams of love
Kindle intense desire to dwell for aye above.

* "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."—Matt. xi. 12.

XLI.

"THE LORD GOD IS A SUN."

PSALM lxxxiv. 11.

I.

THE summer sun was in the deep blue sky,
  Shedding on all beneath his fervid rays;
One soft light cloud was floating calmly nigh—
  The only one that met my upward gaze.

II.

Musingly wandering, I chanced to look
  With sudden glance upon the orb of day;
But, all too weak that blaze of light to brook,
  My dazzled eyes full quickly turned away;—

III.

Turned from the heavens to the meadows green,
  Beside the path where I was slowly straying;
Able and glad to note the glittering sheen,
  When far descended, o'er the verdure playing.

IV.

Ah! who can tell how beautiful is light!
  How sad the heart the sunbeams cannot cheer!
Whatever else be dimmed, they shine as bright
  As erst on Eden, ere it knew a tear.

V.

And brightly shone they now: they did impart
  Radiance, methought, to more than earth and air:
Mine eyes but seemed the windows of my heart,
  That let them in to play and gladden there.

VI.

But suddenly upon the waving grass,
  Adding fresh loveliness to all around,
By contrast strong, I marked a shadow pass,
  With silent motion, wide athwart the ground.

VII.

Turning to look upon its well-known cause,
  Once more from earth to heaven I lift my gaze;
And oh! if light e'er thrilled my soul, it was
  When now it shone a veiled and tempered blaze.

VIII.

The fleecy cloud before the glowing sphere,
  Just softened down enough for mortal sight
That source of beauty and of gladness here,
  While fringed itself with loveliest hues of light.

IX.

Who count it their chief joy, and humbly try
  To walk with God in Christ, will love to trace
Whatever image either earth or sky
  Can yield to mind them of their Saviour's face.

X.

And now, methought, I saw an image fair
  Of Him whose glories, veiled in mortal guise,
Are calmly viewed by eyes that could not bear
  Their beams direct descending from the skies.

XI.

I saw an emblem of my Lord abased;
  Yet never lovelier mid the choirs of heaven;
Godhead with manhood dimmed, and manhood graced
  With rays divine, that man might be forgiven!

XII.

O God, I bless thee for the shadows here!
  They serve to help awhile faith's feeble sight;
But oh! ere long let shadows disappear
  In cloudless, sunless, everlasting light!

XLII.

THE WATERFALL.

"He that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."—1 Cor. ix. 25.

I.

Plunging wildly, foaming madly,
  See the headlong waterfall!
Then—exhausted—winding sadly—
  Like a wearied prodigal.

II.

Whitening now with rage and fury,
  See it bursting o'er its bound!
Then, as if, ashamed, 'twould bury
  Even its head beneath the ground!

III.

Such the course of human passion,
  Uncontrolled by wisdom's hand;
First, it recklessly will dash on—
  Then, ashamed, or wearied, stand.

IV.

Mine be rather like the river,
  As it gently, smoothly glides;
Both partaking and the giver
  Of the bounty heaven provides.

V.

May my every wish and feeling
  Duly in the channel flow,
Marked by that pure word revealing
  All that mortals need below.

VI.

So life's stream with tranquil motion,
  Heaven reflected in its face,
Onward to the boundless ocean
  Its benignant course shall trace.

XLIII.

IMAGES OF LIFE.

"They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. . . . . My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle."—Job ix. 26; vii. 6.

I.

To fancy's view, exulting in the ease
With which he floated down or met the breeze;
Now curving gently round, as if to show
His grace was equal to his strength, and now
Still in mid air—then soaring swift on high;—
I marked an eagle sporting in the sky.

II.

Pleased to look on as with the winds he played,
Gazing, and musing on the bird, I strayed—
When suddenly, with startling whirring sound,
Roused by my footstep from the stubble-ground,
A partridge rose; and, with a straight low flight,
Soon caught the feathered monarch's piercing sight.

III.

Checking his sportive course, the bird on high
Quivered a moment o'er him in the sky,
With head bent downward—then with matchless flight,
His wings expanded now—now closing tight,
He strikes his quarry with a fatal blow,
And lays him bleeding on the grass below.

IV.

Alone, disposed for thought, and still to roam
While sank the sun into his gorgeous home—
What may I learn from this? I half inquire:
'Learn,' said a voice, 'that goodness to admire,
Which in the eagle *hasting to his prey*
Warns thee how swiftly fleet thine hours away.'

V.

'Learn that, compared with ages infinite,
Thy life is pictured by an eagle's flight—
His flight when swiftest—when with cleaving wing
He downward darts, like arrow from the string;
And, carrying still that image in thy view,
Do with thy might whate'er thou hast to do.'

VI.

'Follow thy Lord—work on while yet 'tis light;
And be not tempted to forget the night:
Treading even now so closely on the grave,
Where wisdom ceases, and no arm can save,
See, ere thou enter, that, like yonder sun,
All that thou hast to do by day is done.'

VII.

'Let the poor victim too upon the ground
Teach thee how quickly real ills are found,
When fancied ones are fled: that bleeding bird,
Had he a friendly step in stillness heard,
Had 'scaped a foe: like many a wiser head,
He fell the victim of a needless dread.'

VIII.

'He "feared where no fear was"—a mortal nigh
Was worse to him than danger from the sky:
The one was heard—the other heard nor seen,
Tho' plain above in yonder blue serene:—
If thou shouldst marvel at such folly, see
Thyself be not a greater prodigy.'

IX.

Then homeward turning, blest, methought, are they
Who live mid rural scenes, and day by day
Can roam abroad, and in their secret walk
Still find some monitor with whom to talk;
Something which whispers, as they wander here,
That death, eternity, and God are near.

X.

And yet again, (for, swifter than the flight
Of swiftest bird, beyond the bounds of sight
The mind can travel,) yet again, methought,
Who loves to learn may every where be taught:
Even amid the city's loudest din
A whispering voice is heard around, above, within.

XI.

Yon humble weaver sitting at his loom,
That God remembers who appoints his doom;
And though the swift-winged eagle in the sky
Rarely or never meet his languid eye,
Yet in his passing *shuttle* he may see
His task will soon be done—his spirit free.

XII.

Let him but meekly bear the appointed load,
And, while he toils for man, remember God;
Let him with singleness of heart and eye
Cleave to his Lord, and ever feel him nigh;
And not the wanderer in field or grove
Shall taste more sweetly that his "God is love."

XIII.

A thousand mercies in the common round
Of duties and enjoyments shall be found,
To tell him by the light of that pure page,
Prized as his brightest earthly heritage,
That one whose lot was lowly as his own,
Blesses the poor man now from heaven's eternal
throne.

XIV.

And yet once more my spirit winged its way
From busy haunts of men to where the spray
Of ocean beats—the sailor's boundless home,
With its still changeful, yet eternal dome:
And here, methought, amid the water's roar,
A small still voice is heard, as on the calmer shore.

XV.

What fitter image of the life of man
Than every day the sailor's eye may scan!
The perilous flood, the threatening clouds reveal
Truths deep and solemn: and when thunders peal,
And lightnings flash, and hearts not wont to quail
Sink in the breast, and the rough cheek grows pale,—

XVI.

He knows the value of a rock on high,
In which, amid the horrors of the sky,
The soul may feel its anchor firm to save,
Though sink the vessel in the whirling wave;—
Or oh! how piercing is the seaman's shriek,
If that sure rock above his soul have then to seek!

XVII.

Ah! had he listened to the warning given,
His vessel's course had been a voice from heaven;
For He who minds the weaver at his loom,
And him who rambles where the meadows bloom,
Writes for the sailor on the ocean spray,
That like the *swift ship* hastes his life away.

XVIII.

And many a tempest past might well have told,
When still the anchor, faithful to its hold,
Had saved the body from the raging tide,
How blest the spirit that can calm confide
In that one *anchor* which shall never fail,
Stedfast and sure above, made firm "within the veil."

XIX.

Thus has a wise and ever equal hand
Diffused abroad on ocean and on land,
Wherever foot can stray or vessel bear,
Something to bid the heedless to beware;
And mind the Christian, on his heavenward way,
Of present help while here, and coming blissful day.

XX.

Oh, that our hearts were wise as God is good,
And every place would yield our needful food!—
Our daily bread for body and for soul
Is scattered everywhere, from pole to pole;
And lest the blessing should escape our eyes,
One lamp is in our hand*—ten thousand in the skies.

* "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."—PSALM CXIX. 105.

XLIV.

ADVERSITY.

"Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. iv. 17.

I.

He who is newly floating o'er
  The bosom of the ocean,
And knows but little of the lore
  That rules the vessel's motion,
Might dread a cross wind's mighty force,
And deem it would retard her course.

II.

Not so the mariner well skilled
  To mark the good ship's going;
He loves to see the white sails filled
  With transverse breezes blowing;
For swiftly then,—most swiftly glides
The vessel o'er the surging tides.

III.

Even thus life's voyagers, who know
  To win the sacred haven,
When seeming adverse tempests blow,
  And other hearts were craven,
Hear but the strong propitious gales
That swell the homeward speeding sails.

IV.

In sweet security they rest
  Above the heaving billow,
Calm as the babe upon the breast
  Of love—its native pillow:
Each storm, they know, but wafts them o'er
More swiftly to the peaceful shore.

XLV.

THE HYACINTHS.

I.

Two bulbs upon my mantel-shelf
  Affection's hand had placed;
Each with a long glass to itself,
  Of short and slender waist.

II.

A week or more in russet hue,
  Like silent man and wife,
Each bulb remained, nor leaf in view
  Appeared, nor sign of life.

III.

At length full many a fibre shoots—
  Pledge of the floweret rare—
Directly downward from the roots,
  And shows that life is there.

IV.

And day by day you might have seen
  These fibres longer grow;
And yet above, no sign of green—
  The life seemed all below.

V.

But only seemed; for ere they shot
  The glasses half way down,
Each bulb displayed a little spot
  Of green upon its crown.

VI.

And now on each returning morn,
  Though never springing high,
The shining emerald leaves adorn
  The root, and please the eye.

VII.

And quickly too the flower is seen;
  It can no longer hide;
For, growing faster than the green,
  Its veil must needs divide.

VIII.

And higher still it shoots above
  The leaves with vigorous power,
Till scarce in garden or in grove
  Were seen a lovelier flower.

IX.

Yet this were only half its praise:
  Its petals, opening wide,
The sweetest perfume, as you gaze,
  Diffuse on every side.

X.

And still the best remains to tell:
  For, charming sight and scent,
It charms the listening ear as well
  With kind admonishment.

XI.

'In us,' each gently whispers, 'trace
  How needful is the root,
Before the lovely flowers of grace
  From any heart can shoot.'

XII.

'Nor less remark, how healthful growth
May long unseen abide,
And sweetest beauty aye is loath
To throw its veil aside.'

XIII.

'Enough, if it be found at length
To please the gazer's eye,
And win him by its grace and strength
Himself to follow nigh.'

XIV.

'Tis thus each hyacinth, as it grows,
Seems every day to preach;
And who can choose but follow those
That do so sweetly teach?

XLVI.

THE TIME-PIECE.

I.

Upon my chimney-shelf a time-piece stood,
With face of silver, and with hands of gold,
Encased so curiously in ebon wood,
It was a goodly time-piece to behold.

II.

Like many however with a face as bland,
It had a very independent way;
It differed wholly from the church at hand,
And sometimes seemed as 'twould outface the day.

III.

For haply just at setting of the sun,
When every eye the coming night could trace,
This time-piece would pronounce it to be one,
And still persist with most unblushing face.

IV.

Feeling that argument were surely vain,
  I strove to mitigate, if not to cure,
This daily, hourly evil,—which 'tis plain,
  'Twas scarce in nature calmly to endure,—

V.

By opening oft the glass-door of its case,
  Which hung upon a little hinge or joint,
And, with my finger thrust into its face,
  The hands directing where they ought to point.

VI.

But this, since it was needful every day,
  Ere many weeks a tedious labour grew,
'Till I was fain to seek some other way
  Of making this mendacious time-piece true.

VII.

So, though I knew but little of the nature
  Of all the cunning works its face behind,
Yet, knowing just there *was* a regulator,
  The regulator I resolved to find.

VIII.

'Twas found well nigh as soon as it was sought;
And here the evil lay, 'twas clear to see;
For by a single touch much good was wrought,
And wholly cured the time-piece was by three.

IX.

Mortal! if thou wouldst run thy daily race
By heaven's own light, nor from the truth depart,
Expend not care or thought upon thy face;
But set the regulator right—thy heart.

XLVII.

THE MOWER'S SCYTHE.

I.

MANY praise the soaring lark
  Warbling in the sky so blithe,
Till you scarce can choose but hark :—
  Why so few, the mower's scythe?

II.

Even the bee within the flower,
  Bending its small stem so lithe,
Has of praises had a shower :—
  Why then not the mower's scythe?

III.

Oh, the glittering tinkling weapon,
  Played on by a skilful hand,
When at early morn you step on
  The fresh dewy meadow land!

IV.

Here is one, and there another;
  Haply there are four or five;
Each as blithesome as its brother;
  Making all the field alive!

V.

Now the tones are high and thrilling;
  Quick too as the lightning's wing;
Every heart that listens filling,
  Beyond all imagining!

VI.

Then—how softly, smoothly gliding,
  As each instrument doth pass
Just before the mower guiding
  Its curved motion through the grass!

VII.

Oh! sweep on, thou mighty mower!
  'Tis a wondrous pleasant sound:
I don't marvel thou should'st pore
  Thus, to hearken, on the ground.

VIII.

No, nor yet to see the flowerets
  Fall before thee there, and die;
As if each, o'ercome, did pour its
  Spirit forth in ecstasy.

IX.

'Tis enough to make a poet
  Even with very envy writhe
At thy skill, and long to know it,
  That his harp might match a scythe.

X.

On! sweep on! thou mighty mower!
  Thou hast never had a tithe
Of the praise for music's power,
  Due to thee and thy bright scythe!

XLVIII.

THE LOVE OF NATURE NOT THE LOVE OF GOD.

A HEART for nature's beauties is a dower,
That is mistaken oft for holy love;
And prompts at seasons, with delusive power,
Unhallowed lips to praise that God above,
From whom alone the soft voice of the dove,
The lark's bright song, the perfume of the flower,
The brook, the rainbow painted on the shower,
With the unnumbered things that reach and move
The spirit's depths,—derive their secret force:
But, oh! if *thou* would'st lift a song on high,
Pure and devout, to the eternal source
Of all that stirs us so mysteriously,
Then, in thy love for nature learn to trace
A *Father's* love for *thee—know God a God of grace!*

XLIX.

THE DEW.

"My speech shall distil as the dew."—DEUT. xxxii. 2.

I.

NOON has its monarch risen high;
  Eve has its purple hue;
Night decks with countless stars the sky;
  The morning has the dew.

II.

What lessons may be learnt from each
  Another day may see;
But now the lowliest shall teach
  My heart humility.

III.

Praise to our God! his grace is such,
  That scarce our eyes can greet
The morn, but what we need so much
  Is lying at our feet.

IV.

Clothed too in smiles: as it would win
  A kind and gentle way
To every heart ere it begin
  The turmoil of the day.

V.

Thy couch is low, my monitor;
  But He who best could preach
Descended often to the shore,
  Sublimest truths to teach.

VI.

No need He knew of lofty state,
  Or earthly eminence:
Tis wisdom gives the lesson weight,
  And truth is eloquence.

VII.

Even such thy teaching on the ground:
  Who will in thee may trace,
That peace and safety may be found
  Best in the lowest place.

VIII.

The wind that strips the forest bare
  Blows harmless over thee;
The sun with all his fiercest glare
  But lends thee wings to flee.

IX.

He decks thee even at thy birth
  With gems of loveliest hue;
And then, when grown too bright for earth,
  Takes up from mortal view.

X.

Brief is thy pleasant sojourn here;
  Thy loss too none may mind;
But many followed by a tear
  Leave less of good behind.

XI.

I trace thee in the springing grass,
  And in the bending corn;
And every floweret that I pass
  Rejoices thou wert born.

XII.

Thou art not like so many here,
  A friend that comes with speed,
When sunshine joys the bosom cheer,
  And then forsakes in need.

XIII.

But often in the hour of gloom,
  When thirsty, faint, and spent,
And when they little know from whom
  It comes, thine aid is lent.

XIV.

The clouds, though often kind, may fail;
  No drop in lake or mere;
The streams dry up in every dale;
  But thou still kind art near.

XV.

'Tis pure, 'tis perfect charity
It steals in silence down,
Nor cares that any eye should see
Its works save heaven's alone.

XVI.

So may *my* days on earth be spent!
Ever may I be found
In lowly place, secure, content,
And good diffusing round!

XVII.

May it suffice that heaven sees,
And like the morning dew,
On wings of light, when heaven shall please,
May I soar up from view!

XVIII.

Then, knowing in a happier sphere
A morn without a night,
The same bright sun that decked me here
Shall be my endless light.

L.

THE RESOURCE OF THE SENSITIVE.

Art thou a spirit of a gentle mould?
Sensitive, tender—haply to excess—
Pained by a word too harsh, a look too cold,
And most of all from them thou would'st caress?
Thou hast within, what, if thou wilt, shall bless,
Through grace divine, with future good untold,
And even here yield pleasures numberless,
And waken praises too as manifold:
From all below, oh, turn to one on high!
Taste, taste the sweetness of a Saviour's love!
Expect no more on earth the sympathy
A heart like thine ne'er found except above;
Thou needest one who thoughts untold can read,
And fans the smoking flax, and binds the bruised reed.

LI.

TRUST IN A RISEN SAVIOUR.

"Be careful for nothing."—PHIL. iv 6.

I.

As on I pass along the crowded way
  To the one silent resting-place of all,
Thy Word, the *lamp* that lights me on my way,
  Casts a bright gleam even on the funeral pall.

II.

Illumined thus, my risen Lord, I trust
  In Thee to raise what Thou hast died to save,
In new-born power and glory from the dust,
  To which ere long 'twill moulder in the grave.

III.

And shall I doubt thy goodness to provide
  For this frail form *before* I yield my breath?
Forgive, blest Lord, the thought! I will confide
  In Thee alike for all in life or death.*

* The above lines were suggested by the following passage in the writings of Bishop Hall: "I will rely on Him for small matters of this life: for how shall I hope to trust him in [seeming] impossibilities, if I may not in likelihoods? How shall I depend on Him for raising my body from dust, and saving my soul, if I mistrust him for a crust of bread, towards my preservation?"

For similar assistance in one or two other of the pieces which form this volume, the author is also indebted to prose divines.

LII.

HOME.

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."—PROV. xxvii. 8.

I.

THROUGH all the world, so varied, and so vast,
May there not be some little chosen spot,
Wherein 'twere better that my lot were cast,
And which, with careful search, were wisely sought?
Never, oh, never, while the truth remains
That love supremely wise my home and lot ordains!

II.

The bird that idly wanders from her nest,—
  A prodigy in nature rarely seen,—
Must build another ere she calmly rest;
  While; chill and dying in their leafy screen,
She leaves the fruit of many a toil and care,
That soon had gladdened her, and all the woodland air.

III.

And when the second nest is built, and warm
  With tender life that should endear her home,
Where is the tie of nature, or the charm,
  To bind her now? Why should she cease to roam?
She will not cease, till restless heart and wing
Shall both alike be cold mid withered leaves of spring.

IV.

'Tis not in place to give the heart repose:
  The bird that wanders from the mountain pine
Would quit alike the woodbine and the rose,
  And see no beauty in the clustered vine:

The very winds that rocked her on the height,
Might sooner rest than she, while seeking rest in
flight.

V.

Then learn, my heart, what wisdom's voice would
teach,
And, though the silly bird may guiltless rove,
In thee, forget not, 'twere but to impeach
Alike thy Father's wisdom and his love:
In this best home let all thy joys be sought,
And this be chiefest still—that God appoints thy lot.

LIII.

DEATH.

(THOUGHTS FOR THE CHRISTIAN.)

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—ECCLES. xii. 7.

I.

WHERE in its solemn gloom the yew-tree stands,
Shadowing the pathway to the House of God,
And ceaseless sighing o'er fresh weeping bands,
This form will rest ere long beneath the sod.

II.

It may be when the birds and flowers of spring
With songs and odours fill the vernal breeze,
Or when the summer bird's unwearied wing
Skims the green lawn with ever graceful ease.

III.

It may be when the autumn winds have blown
  O'er fields and woods, where I have loved to stray;
And all around the withered leaves be strown,
  Like me to moulder in the dust away.

IV.

Or haply from a home which hath for me
  Had peaceful charms no other spot could show,
This form conveyed with solemn step shall be,
  While winter weaves her soft white robe of snow.

V.

Lord both of life and death! Thy will be done!
  Enough that all is in thy wise control;
And that at last, when life's fleet race is run,
  The grave but takes the body—not the soul.

VI.

Nor yet the body to retain it long;
  For thou hast ransomed both with priceless love:
These eyes shall see Thee, and these lips the song
  Of praise shall utter 'mid the blest above!

LIV.

KNOWLEDGE FROM EXPERIENCE.

"O taste, and see that the Lord is good."—PSALM XXXIV. 8.

I.

To one who from a polar home
  Should tread a sunnier plain,
The sweetness of the honey-comb
  Might be *described* in vain.

II.

What likeness could the eternal snows,
  And icy regions yield
To that which where the floweret blows,
  The bee delights to build?

III.

But let him *taste* the honey-comb,
  And he will quickly know,
Such sweetness in his polar home
  Were sought in vain, I trow.

IV.

Mortal! would'st thou discern what bliss
  In piety can be;
There is no other way but this—
  Its sweetness taste, and see.

LV.

MYSTERY.

"Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

I.

Who ever saw the birth-place of the fountain?
  What eye can trace it to its journey's end?
We say its earliest home is in the mountain,
  And that 'tis lost where ocean's waves extend;
But ah! how little do we know of either!
  'Tis like the wind, we see not whence it comes;
And, for its end, the wisest dream not whither
  The little rippling dancing streamlet roams.

II.

Perchance we deem that this at least is certain—
'Tis ever still a wanderer on the earth;
But then, what forms that soft and silvery curtain,
Which scarcely hides yon orb of lofty birth?
Or say, whence came the gems that in the morning
Were glittering all around, but now are gone:
Lovelier than ever were a bride's adorning,
And briefer too—though evening saw her lone?

III.

'Tis mystery all! the cloud so light and fleecy,
And so transparent to the gazer's eye,
Trace for an hour—oh, 'twere a task as easy
To track the rainbow to or from the sky!
And the bright dew that smiled its little hour,
Clearer than crystal to the outward sense,
Were dark as midnight to that deeper power
Which fain would scan its birth, or trace it hence!

IV.

Be still, my soul! and know that thy Creator
Is great, "past finding out," the mighty God!

'Tis all thou knowest, or that suits thy nature
To know ere sinks thy dwelling in the sod:
Ah, no!—one truth besides that God hath taught thee,
And oh! out-pour thy praise!—that he hath given
His only Son to die for thee, and bought thee
To live, and know as thou art known, in heaven!

V.

A little season, and in light unclouded,
A light that beams from one bright centre, love,
All shall unfolded be that now is shrouded
To every eye that looks not from above:
Oh, watch its dawning! watch as o'er the mountain
The traveller watches through the gloom of night,
And thou shalt see the birth-place of the fountain,
The dew, the cloud, the sun, and rainbow hues of light!

LVI.

LIFE NOT A DREAM.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."
—Eccles. ix. 10.

I.

'Tis said that life is but a dream,
Or shadow that doth come and go;
And to the thoughtful it might seem,
Full many count it so.

II.

But neither image, if ye view
It well, and closely scan,
Will ye discover pictures true
The life of mortal man.

III.

A dream—of gladness, or of grief—
  May end as it begun:
A shadow passeth, and its brief,
  Scarce noticed course is run.

IV.

A dream, when judgment to her throne
  The morning beams restore,
And shadow, when 'tis past and gone,
  Are seldom heard of more.

V.

But human life, if named aright,
  What is it but the seed
Of growing ages infinite,
  That human death succeed?

VI.

It never ends as it began:
  It hardly *passeth by:*
We breathe—and thus begin the span;
  We cease to breathe—and die.

VII.

But death—'tis but another name
  For life's intenser fire:
Ye would not say 'tis quenched, the flame
  That brighter shines and higher.

VIII.

Be it we drop this 'mortal coil;'
  End we life thus?—as well
Say that the bird ends hers the while
  She breaketh from the shell.

IX.

Oh, mortal! never think that life
  Is what to some it seemeth:
With dread realities 'tis rife,
  Which who forgets—*he* dreameth.

X.

Dreameth—because he shuns the light,
  And, in the darkness lying,
With visions fills a self-made night,
  And only wakes—in dying.

XI.

In dying wakes—and never more
  To dream or sleep again;
But with unclosing eye explore
  A home of hopeless pain!

XII.

Art thou with slumb'rous fetters bound?
  Oh, hear thy Saviour call!
Wake to realities profound,
  Ere truth itself appal.

XIII.

Upon this little being hangs
  Eternal weal or woe;
Bright joys above, or bitterest pangs
  In dismal depths below.

XIV.

Whatever else be shadowy here,
  Or dreamy, or ideal,
Than human life this solid sphere
  Of earth is not more real.

XV.

Nay, earth itself shall pass away;
While all that, viewed aright,
Is life, shall bless an endless day,
Or curse an endless night.

XVI.

The very hour now passing by—
Oh, spirit-thrilling truth!—
May influence eternity
For blessing or for ruth!

XVII.

Then, marking well, immortal man,
How much is to be done,
Resolve that in this little span
All heaven shall be won.

XVIII.

Resolve!—the purpose firmly made
Is half the victory;
And, while upon the Saviour stayed,
Count fear thine enemy.

XIX.

Trusting in Christ that every sin
  Shall freely be forgiven,
Life shall be long enough to win
  Eternity in heaven.

LVII.

THE LIVING FACE.

I.

THERE are who love with pictures rare
  Their solitary room to grace,
And yet the while but little care
  To see the happiest living face.

II.

For me, I own the painter's skill;
  The magic touch delight to trace;
But, mimic beauty loving, still
  I love far more the living face.

III.

One well-known smile, one chosen look
  The pencil may with truth portray;
But glances changeful as the brook
  That dimples, sparkles on its way,—

IV.

Oh, these defy the painter's art,
  Whate'er the praises it hath won,
As living sunbeams never dart
  Around, but from a living sun.

V.

The gifts are countless Heaven bestows
  As rain-drops from the clouded dome;
But earthly boon no bosom knows
  More sweet than one loved face at home.

VI.

One face that oft with gentle smile
  Reveals the fondness of a heart,
Which all our cares would fain beguile,
  And all its own sweet joys impart.

VII.

Hast thou e'er seen how in the wood
  A climbing rose, with blossoms bright,
Can deck and cheer the solitude
  Around her with her own soft light?

VIII.

Even such, within the little bound
  That forms our earthly dwelling-place,
The gladness that is shed around
  By one beloved, and happy face.

IX.

Be that within, the storm without
  In vain shall spend its utmost ire;
Or be as winter's wildest rout,
  That more endears the blazing fire.

X.

Oh, be it always mine to see,
  Whatever else may fail to grace
My home, that dearest sight to me,
  A loving, cheerful, changeful face.

LVIII.

QUIT YOU LIKE MEN.

1 Cor. xvi. 13.

I.

Would'st thou from hands beloved, adored,
  Receive the victor's wreath?—
Then, for the combat draw the sword!—
  And throw away the sheath!

II.

Beneath the banners of the Cross,
  High in the Heavens unfurled,
And counting every prize as "loss"
  That lures a rebel world,—

III.

Fight, as the strong man armed would fight,
  To save his dearest hoard!—
Till thou hast won the chaplet bright:
  Then—throw away the sword!

LIX.

THE FIRST LAMB.

I.

Thou little new-born basker in the sun—
  Stretch'd on thy side—as thou hadst nought to do,
But feel how pleasantly thy moments run,
  While vernal beams just warm thy vesture thro'!

II.

Ah! start not up, as if thou fearedst me,
  And haste thus tottering to thy bleating dam;
I were as loath to injure thee as she,
  Though she may love thee better, timorous lamb.

III.

And why dread me, too, more than yonder steed,
  That snorts and trots so loftily around;
As he would lord it over all the mead,
  Nor cared if he should crush thee on the ground

IV.

Thou had'st not risen thus, I ween, for him;
  And even now thou only look'st at me:
What, little youngling, or in face or limb,
  Have I to wake thy terror more than he?

V.

Ah! sin, thou meetest me where'er I stray!
  I see thee in the city, and the woods;
Beside the beaten, and sequestered way;
  In busiest haunts, and stillest solitudes!

VI.

Or rather, I do bring thee in my bosom—
  As if my spirit from its home must fly,
Ere it can see beneath the hawthorn blossom
  A little milk-white lamb without a sigh!

VII.

Time was, thou gentlest playmate of the spring,
  Thou hadst believed man's look of love sincere—
No ill suspected that his form could bring,
  But rather licked the hand thou could'st not fear.

VIII.

All, all is changed! Man treads the green earth now
  A monarch shunned—too oft with prudent fear:
Each creature flees him: even from the bough
  The little warbler flits, when he draws near!

IX.

And yet, methinks, while gazing upon thee
  Beneath the brightness of this vernal sky,
Dim were the faith or dead that could not see
  More to awaken gladness than a sigh.

X.

If earth remind me, wheresoe'er I rove,
  That sinful man is from his Maker riven,
I trace an emblem of redeeming love,
  Whether I look upon the earth or heaven.

XI.

In thee, sweet type of meekest innocence,
  Whose blood ere long some mortal hand shall shed,
I read of one, my refuge and defence,
  In silent sorrow to the slaughter led.

XII.

And thou, all-glorious renovating sun,
From whose bright beams this living beauty springs,
Thou too remind'st me of the Holy One—
The same—but risen with healing in his wings!

XIII.

Oh, Lamb of God! Oh, sun of righteousness!
Atoning Saviour! fount of light and life!
This peaceful walk, I ask of thee to bless,
When comes the world once more with noise and strife.

LX.

OPPORTUNITY.

They who are strongly bent on earthly gain,
Fit time for effort with rejoicing see;
And scarce prize ought like *opportunity*
To prosecute their purpose; nor complain,
If it demand that they should strive amain,
So that the prospect bright and ample be;
And yet how often labour they in vain,
Or, worse, reap sorrow for their energy!
Christian! art thou with trials deep opprest,
While seeking happiness supreme in heaven?
Know that to win a large reward the best
Of opportunities even thus is given: *
Bear unrepining—following still thy Lord,
And, for his sake, how bright shall be thy *sure*
reward!

* 2 Cor. iv. 17, and xii. 9.

LXI.

REST FOUND.

I.

Time was I sought, but sought in vain,
  What most I wanted—rest;
But now at times this heart is fain
  To fear it is too blest.

II.

With health, the very best that heaven
  Could give a wayward child,
Who, had that boon been always given,
  Were haply still beguiled;—

III.

With wealth—aye wealth, for he is rich
  Who seeks, nor cares for more—
Supplying every comfort which
  A pilgrim dare implore;—

IV.

With love within, around, above,
  A rural still retreat
Beside an ever vocal grove,
  Where many waters meet;—

V.

(Even now I hear the waterfall,
  That I have rarely heard,
But, as with influence magical,
  My inmost heart was stirred:

VI.

And if, save this bright evening fire,
  There be no other sound,
I love to think how sweet a quire
  Are sleeping all around;—

VII.

Reposing from a day of song
  That well may make them weary;
But only to awake ere long
  And be again as cheery;—)

VIII.

With duties that are pleasures too,
  When arms divine uphold,—
To call Christ's sheep, and lead them through
  The desert to the fold ;—

IX.

To spread the blessed tidings round
  Of sin through Christ forgiven ;
And show how peace on earth is found,
  And rest secured in heaven ;—

X.

With hope that by the spirit's grace,
  While journeying yet below,
I may myself the pathway trace
  Which I to others show ;—

XI.

And thus with many whom I teach,—
  Though oft with faltering care !—
My Saviour's home above may reach,
  And see his glory there ;—

XII.

Oh! marvel ye, if e'er I feel,
  While yet beneath the sky,
A fear lest this loved home should steal
  My heart from that on high?

XIII.

But thou, who hearest all who turn
  To Thee, and humbly pray,
If ever heavenly joys I spurn,
  Take earthly joys away.

XIV.

Rather with terror let me quail
  Beneath thy dreaded wrath,
Than taste thy goodness here, and fail
  To tread the narrow path.

XV.

But oh! let love, let love suffice!
  Still bind my heart to Thee
With that soft chain of countless price,
  My Saviour bought for me!

LXII.

EVENING.

I.

WHAT is it in yon thrush's mellow note,
That wakes an echo in my inmost heart?
And whence do the bright clouds that o'er him float
Such deep unruffled peacefulness impart—
As I had soared from earth, and were at rest
Mid the fair hues upon their downy breast,
And listening from the quiet of the skies
To evening's rich, and full-toned melodies?

II.

I may not tell another: nay, 'tis past—
That calm delight—the instant I would sound
Its hidden depths; even as a vision cast
Upon the sleeper from some tone around

He hears unconsciously of music sweet,
And which, awaking, he would fain repeat;
But vainly tries—as easy 'twere to trace
Echo that hideth still her smiling fairy face.

III.

Some feelings are too shadowy or too deep
  To scan or fathom—far less to reveal:
You may describe the harp, but not the sweep
  That thrills the ear, or dying tones that steal
Within so softly: that were to express
What words were never made for—powerless
Is speech to tell the hidden secret things,
That come and go as with a spirit's wings.

IV.

And yet, 'tis sweet to commune with our kind
  Even with such feeble utterance as we may;
And sweet to feel that many a kindred mind
  Needs but a tone, a breath, to flee away
From present things around, and share with ours
Whatever beauties lavish nature showers
Upon her simple votaries and sincere,
Through all the changes of the changeful year.

V.

'Tis sweet to know that they will answer true
  To what we cannot tell but by a sign,
That serves remembered pleasures to renew :
  Just as a leaf or tendril of the vine
May bear the spirit to some garden fair,
Where flowers perfume, and glad bees fan the air,
While yet the laggard frame which it has fled
Is mid the sights and sounds in cities only bred.

VI.

Perchance these simple notes may one day find
  A heart in tone to feel them : they may yield
A peaceful pleasure to a genial mind ;
  And bear it to some quiet rural field,
From out the haunts of men, to taste awhile
Fancy's pure joys, and with her dreams beguile
Moments of leisure, that might else be spent
In languid listlessness, or discontent.

VII.

If e'er they should, my brother pilgrim, learn
  To trace in nature's beauties love divine ;

In every joy let faith's bright eye discern
  The hand that gives; and be it ever thine
To know that hand a Father's!—Oh, delight
To feel Him close around thee; and unite
With all thy pleasures filial sacred love;
And each shall be the pledge of brighter joys above.

VIII.

Let Eve's rich melodies, and purple hues
  Bear thee aloft to their exhaustless source;
Pray that by grace divine they may diffuse
  A holy influence through thy breast, and force
Thine heart to pant for purer loftier song,
And brighter scenes, angelic hosts among:
If evening here be sweet to heart and eye,
How sweet the morning of eternity!

LXIII.

THE FIRST AND SECOND BIRTH-PLACE.

I.

WHERE first the Turtle-dove spreads forth her wing,
  And vainly strives to soar into the skies;
Where first the nightingale essays to sing
  Beneath the moon, in broken melodies;—
There is a charm which breathes around the spot;
A home they love, although they know it not;
And never shall it be, where'er they range, forgot.

II.

Man feels alike: how dear is still the place,
  Where, in the season of his youthful glee,
He started faltering on life's chequered race!—
  All that the stranger passeth heedlessly

Lives in his heart: his first-born hopes were there;
Blossoms of promise, which, though nipped by care,
Have shed abroad and left their perfume in the air.

III.

And is it not the same of that fresh course,
  On which, too often at a distant day,
He enters, drawn by love's constraining force,
  To taste the pleasures of a heavenward way?
Oh, yes! the second birth-place shall be dear,
Hallowed to memory by the contrite tear,
That spake returning love, and filial holy fear.

IV.

Deeper and deeper root it in my heart,
  With every vow, 'uttered or unexpressed,'
Which reached thine ear, that I would never part
  From thee, my Saviour, whom I then confessed:
Whatever time may rob me of below,
Whatever storm around my path may blow,
May all I purposed then still live within and grow!

LXIV.

INSECT JOY.

Above the streamlet's bend, in this warm nook,
How vast the sum of gladness at its height!—
Yea, overflowing!—gladness that cannot brook
A moment's stillness!—but impels to flight
Whose twinkling evolutions baffle sight,
And to the eye most fixed and searching look
As weaving but confusion exquisite;
While yet each wing moves freely, as it took
A lonely way, fanning the evening breeze,
In place of beams instinct with life as these!
And is this joy, so rapturously high,
A drop—a point immeasurably small—
Of that which fills the earth, the air, the sky?—
Oh, who shall speak thy praise, Great, Bounteous
God of all!

LXV.

TO A CAGED THRUSH.

(IN A CROWDED STREET.)

I.

Thou mayst be light of heart, sweet bird,
  Though reft of liberty;
And blither notes I never heard
  From sunniest bush or tree.

II.

And yet, though I could listen long,
  Wert thou unprisoned nigh,
And thank thee for that well-known song,
  It now but wakes a sigh:

III.

A sigh for far-off meadows green,
  Or more for sheltering grove,
Where thou didst learn those notes, I ween,
  And I should joy to rove.

IV.

I scarce can think thou art so gay
  As thou wouldst fondly seem;
But rather thus wouldst chase away
  An ever returning dream:

V.

A dream that o'er thee from a cloud,
  Or passing breeze might creep:
Thou singest as one might laugh aloud
  That else were forced to weep.

VI.

Or is it, thou wouldst sweetly teach
  A lesson of content
With any lot that comes, to each
  Who sees thy banishment?

VII.

Art thou a little winged spright
  Within these busy haunts,
To show how men may put to flight
  Their sorrows and their wants?

VIII.

Oh, I will deem it thus may be,
  And so to thee will listen,
Till I can praise for liberty,
  As thou dost for thy prison.

IX.

I will not sigh for the green fields,
  Or woodlands, far away;
But take what even a city yields
  Of gladness for to-day.

X.

As thou wouldst vainly beat thy wing
  Against the wires about thee;
And so contentedly dost sing
  Where all were gloom without thee,—

XI.

So I, with happier lot than thine,
  Will chafe or struggle never;
But make like thine my home a shrine
  Of songs and gladness ever.

LXVI.

THE SPIRIT'S THIRST.

Witness this one fair lake, upon whose side
So oft, at even, 'tis my joy to roam,—
Gazing upon a thousand things that hide
Their beauties, till the heart doth feel at home
With nature's self beneath her open dome,—
That I do love the waters and the woods,
And simple flowers that bloom in solitudes,
And the green meadows, and the soft blue skies,
And mountains with their ever-changeful dyes;
And that I praise with no feigned melodies:
Yet, did the fairest scene that ever beamed
On my rapt gaze—the loveliest morn or even
Beneath whose spell I ever stood and dreamed,
Leave but a deeper thirst—this spirit needs a heaven!

LXVII.

TRUE GREATNESS.

I.

Art thou ambitious?—be ambitious still:
  Pant for the loftiest place, and toil, and strive:
Esteem no post too high for thee to fill:
  Some cedars best upon the summits thrive.

II.

Only—be careful that thou see aright:
  Soar through the mists before thou gaze around:
Down in the valley what thou deem'st a height,
  Viewed from the skies, may seem a depth profound.

III.

What is it forms true greatness? Shall we join
  Rank, fortune, friends, and stored and cultured mind,
With purity of heart, the gift divine,
  Which absent, all were poor, though all combined?

IV.

Then aim at these—on all beside look down:
  And choose of these the highest—Oh, aspire
To win and wear an everlasting crown
  Of glory in the skies!—thou canst no higher.

V.

And think but little of a glittering store
  Of earthly wealth: however great thine hoard,
Count it as dross—seek better wealth and more;
  "Riches unsearchable of Christ" the Lord.

VI.

For friends choose thou the noblest of the earth,
  And angels from the skies: let thine abode
Open its doors to all of heavenly birth—
  Give loving welcome to the friends of God.

VII.

Far above all, make God himself thy friend:
  Like Enoch walk with Him in faith and love;
Admiring grace divine that can descend
  To admit even thee to fellowship above.

VIII.

Nor deem enough the lore of Greece and Rome,
  With aught beside that earthly sages teach:
Prize first and last the sacred priceless tome,
  To which all else is childhood's lisping speech.

IX.

And oh! for purity of life and heart
  Hunger and thirst, and watch and pray—be sure
Thou never here from loftiest aim depart:
  Strive to be pure as God himself is pure.

X.

Thus vent the ardour of thy mounting soul:
  Check not ambition—be ambitious still:
Only aright its fervid course control—
  And Heaven ere long thy craving heart shall fill.

LXVIII.

HEAVENLY REST.

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God."
HEB. IV. 9.

I.

MAN in the morning to his work goes forth,
And rests at even:
Christian, remember, labour is for earth,
Repose for heaven.

II.

Who now sows precious seed, tho' it may be
Too oft with weeping,
Shall, if he patiently await it, see
A joyous reaping.

III.

Fruit shall be gathered, whose abundant store
Shall never perish;
But blissful love, where weeping shall be o'er,
For ever cherish.

IV.

Then scatter freely, nor withhold thy hand
Till close of even:
Earth is the place of toil—the better land
Of rest is heaven.

LXIX.

LITTLE THINGS.

"The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things; but once
Looked up for it in vain."

WORDSWORTH—*(A Wren's Nest.)*

I.

SMALL is the flower of the field,
And small the bee that bends the flower;
Yet flower and bee much nurture yield,
To bless a thoughtful hour.

II.

And he who scorns such little things,
As wisely sure might scorn to eat
The food that bounteous Autumn brings
In little grains of wheat.

III.

Methinks, indeed, that such an one
Few pleasures upon earth will find,
Where well nigh every good is won
From little things combined.

IV.

The lark that in the morning air
Amid the sunbeams mounts and sings—
What bore her up so lightly there?—
Small feathers in her wings.

V.

What form too the resplendent dyes
With which all nature then is bright—
Meadows, and streams, woods, hills, and skies?—
Minutest globes of light.

VI.

And when the earth is sere and sad
From summer's over fervid reign,
How is she in fresh beauty clad?—
By little drops of rain.

VII.

Yea, and the robe that nature weaves,
Whence does it every robe surpass?—
From little flowers, and little leaves,
And little blades of grass.

VIII.

O sure, who scorneth little things,
If he were not a thoughtless elf,
Far above all that round him springs,
Would scorn his little self.

LXX.

THE REWARD OF THE MEEK.

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."
MATT. v. 5.

I.

THIS earth is but a desert wild,
By pilgrims trod of various mood;
Yet even here the meek and mild
In secret eat of angels' food.

II.

And sprinkled o'er the arid waste
Are Palm trees shadowing fountains sweet,
Whose waters *they* may freely taste,
And rest the while their weary feet.

III.

Nor seldom there, as they repose,
  Sheltered beside the murmuring streams,
Bright angels meet them, and disclose
  The home they seek, in waking dreams.

IV.

The pleasant trees, the water's flow,
  The flower-decked marge of mossy sod,
All whisper of a land they know,
  And wake within them praise to God.

V.

Thus oft refreshed, they journey on;
  And even though the tempest's din
May threaten ever and anon,
  That melody is still within.

VI.

It plays among the hidden strings,
  Of heaven-wrought texture, in the bosom,
That feel the viewless seraph's wings,
  And answer to a waving blossom.

VII.

It is the music of the fane,
  Where God abides in wondrous love,
Echoing the distant angel strain
  That fills His dwelling-place above.

VIII.

Two temples doth Jehovah prize,
  Nor will from either e'er depart:
One is above the starry skies;
  The other is the lowly heart.

IX.

In *that* He dwelleth as a Sun,
  Radiant with majesty divine:
In *this* His beams are felt, but none
  May tell how He is in the shrine.

X.

Enough, that He in very deed
  Is there, and doth 'His name record:'
Enough, the faithful heart can *read*,
  It is a temple of the Lord.

XI.

O, blessed are the meek and mild!
  A goodly heritage is given
To them within the desert wild;—
  And what shall be their rest in Heaven!

LXXI.

THE LAUGHTER OF CHILDHOOD.

I.

What were the grove without the wild
  And merry warbler in the trees?
What were the home without the child,
  Whose laughter speaks his ecstasies?

II.

The minstrel may describe the one;
  But would ye rightly know the other,
Go, ask the father who hath done
  His toil, and hastes to child and mother.

III.

Or rather—for the words of men
  Feebly from swelling hearts arise—
Go, mark the gladsome child, and then—
  Look up into the mother's eyes.

IV.

O, sweet it is in woods to roam,
  And list the merry warblers wild!
But sweeter far to hear at home
  The dancing, laughing, joyous child!

V.

Such happiness to-day is mine:
  And yet, O yet, this heart would pray
Far higher bliss of love divine
  Than all that is vouchsafed to-day.

VI.

Give me, O God, ere long to hear
  The voices that endear my home,
Not lifted in tumultuous cheer,
  And changeful as the ocean foam,—

VII.

But each in harmony serene,
  Swelling the anthems that arise
Where Thou art loved, adored, and seen
  With glory circled, in the skies.

LXXII.

HYMN FOR SPRING.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." SONG OF SOLOMON II. 11, 12.

I.

We look around upon returning Spring,
  Great source of life and beauty! and to Thee
Would turn with renovated love, and sing
  The goodness that adorns each bush and tree:
But cold our hearts, and lifeless is our praise!
  With sin polluted, we essay in vain
On heavenly wings our earthly thoughts to raise,
  And chant thy glories in a holier strain.

III.

Would that the scene around us could impart
  To us some portion of its living power;
And raise these dying feelings of the heart,
  As bursts the bud of spring, and blooms the flower!
Then should the hymn of gratitude ascend,
  Pure as the song which seraphim might own,
And even from earth should mortal voices blend
  With theirs who sing for ever round the throne.

IV.

O nature's God, and God of grace, look down!
  Thou that canst deck the dry and withered stems
With lovely hues, to which the monarch's crown
  Were poor, though glittering with costliest gems,
Look down on us!—shall these proclaim thy praise,
  And we be silent? Lord, restore our powers!
And we will sing thy love in heavenly lays—
  Till nature's praises shall be poor to ours.

LXXIII.

LOOK AROUND.

I.

Art thou from bitterest sorrows free?
Tried by no dire calamity?—
Look round upon thy fellow-men
With searching, thoughtful glance—and then,
From earth to heaven uplift thy gaze,
And pour a fervid song of praise.

II.

Amid the homes thou knowest near,
How many where the frequent tear
O'er pain, or want, or wrong, is shed,
Or, haply, over kindred dead!
How few where hopes and joys combine,
Brighter than are—or *might* be thine!

III.

Thou art not free from every ill :
It were not thy Creator's will :
Nor were it good for thee to be
So sheltered upon earth : the tree
Fenced from the breeze as well as storm,
Is poor in fruit, and weak in form.

IV.

Where sunbeams play, the winds may blow;
Where smiles can kindle, tears may flow;
And hearts that never missed the ray
That gladdens, scarce could know the day:
The very shadows that enshroud
Tell of a sun above the cloud.

V.

A little while, and thou shalt see
A land from clouds and shadows free ;
A land where weary pilgrims rest,
In light unutterable blest :
'Tis high above this changeful dome;
The seraph's and the good man's home.

LXXIV.

THE MOTHER'S SOLACE.

"Of such is the kingdom of God."—MARK x. 14.

I.

DEEM not, because its race was run
  So quickly upon earth,
In vain thy darling little one
  Partook of mortal birth.

II.

Nor think, because *thy* joy is flown,
  And changed so soon for sadness,
'Twere better thou hadst never known
  A mother's rapturous gladness.

III.

Thy babe, if it could whisper now
  From yonder peaceful sky,
Would chase the sorrow from thy brow,
  And check the rising sigh.

IV.

'Twould tell thee, to be born below,
  And then so *soon* ascend,
Is first a moment's pain to know;
  Then—joys that never end.

V.

'Twould tell thee, that it did not breathe
  The breath of life to die;
But lived and died, to wear a wreath
  Unfading in the sky:

VI.

Yea, rather, to go up and take
  Its part in songs of love,
And sweeter, louder still to make
  The melodies above.

VII.

Then dry, fond mother, dry the tear;
  Nor think thy babe is dead:
Think, rather, it alighted here
  A moment—and is fled!

LXXV.

SIMPLICITY IN PRAYER.

I.

'Tis not the gilded snowy sheet,
  With decorated letters fair,
That, laid before the monarch's feet,
  Commends to him the suppliant's prayer.

II.

It is the humbly offered plea,
  With simple earnestness expressed,
'Tis nature's artless energy,
  That wins its way into the breast.

III.

Even so, in vain the flowery speech
  To heaven addressed in words unfelt:
This may the throne of mercy reach,
  But not the heart of mercy melt.

IV.

The prayer that doth avail with God
  Up from a swelling bosom springs,
As artlessly as from the sod
  The bird, that thinks not of her wings.

V.

Nor seldom takes a speedier flight
  To the eternal throne above,
Than when, invested with the light,
  It spurns, as weak, the *words*, of love.*

VI.

O, who would win the heavenly prize,
  Must keep the heart with ceaseless care;
For thence the springs of life arise,
  And thence alone ascendeth prayer.

* Rom. viii. 26.

LXXVI.

WAKING IN HEAVEN.

"I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness."
PSALM XVII. 15.

I.

'TIS sweet to wake at early morn
Refreshed and glad, when faint and worn
We laid us down at even:
How sweet, when last we sink to rest
Pallid and spent—amid the blest
To wake in heaven!

II.

On earth, at morning's dawn, once more
Restored to strength, that strength is o'er,
When evening comes again:
In heaven renewed, our angel powers
Shall yield not to a few brief hours;
But aye remain.

III.

On earth, though we may wake, and smile
With new-born joy, a little while,
And tears may tell our woe:
In heaven, who once with joy awake
Shall ever deepening bliss partake
As ages flow.

IV.

Who then that knows, and trusts an arm,
Mighty from every threatening harm
To shield him and to save,
Would shun the swift approching close
Of this frail being—and repose
Within the grave!

LXXVII.

THE SILENT OCEAN.

I.

He who has laid him down, at close of day,
  Within some goodly ship that o'er the waves
Of ocean makes her solitary way,
  And from his pillow hears the tide that laves
Incessantly the vessel's side, may tell
How slight, betwixt him and the billow's swell,
Appears the timber barrier that rejects
The beating surge, and from its might protects.

II.

There is another ocean:—'tis around
  The soul's frail bark that floats upon the tide;
But vainly do we listen: not a sound
  Comes from the depths profound, as on we glide:

By day, by night, for ever, all is still
As the fair moon above the lonely hill :
The viewless angels silent pass us by,
Nor stir the ocean of eternity.

III.

What marvels else would wake us ! O how slight
All that divides from wondrous things would seem !
How frailer than the plank which in the night
Is washed by ocean where the seamen dream!
Yea, than the shell circling the tender bird
Where all around with vernal life is stirred !
Fear passing thought might thrill us, and amaze,
Lest the vast world concealed should burst upon our gaze.

IV.

Yet it *will* burst ere long : a scene untold,
And unconceived, will open on our view :
These slender frames will fail us—and behold,
The God that formed them !—with a retinue

Of holy seraphim, and holy men
In form resplendent as the Saviour, when,
Upon the mount, from out the o'ershadowing cloud,
"This is my son beloved," a voice proclaimed
aloud!

V.

A light, to which, though shining in his might,
The sun were utter darkness, will reveal
Scenes that shall fill with horror, or delight
To holy rapture, such as angels feel:
Truth shall be *seen*: visions shall pass away,
As midnight dreams before the morning ray;
And more than all was ever hoped or feared
Shall be from lips divine in one brief moment heard.

VI.

"Depart from me, accursed!"—How fraught with
woe
Each word of that dread sentence!—far away
From the one only fount whence good may flow,
What tongue can utter, or what heart can weigh

Aright the anguish!—'twere itself a curse,
Dismal, o'erwhelming, if alone; but worse
Shall yet be added to that sentence dire,
" Depart from me, accursed, *into eternal fire!*"

VII.

The sleepless sufferer on a bed of pain
  May count the hours until the morning light;
And, hopeless if he be of cure, sustain
  The better for the hope of change, the night:
Even the iron tongue of time can tell
A tale to assuage the pangs it may not quell:
But what shall be that world of death where time
Is silent—dead in the eternal clime!

VIII.

Turn we from this dread depth of misery!—
  Far other sounds may greet the ravished ear:
" Ye blessed of my Father, come to me,
  And be through ages everlasting near:
Dwell in the mansions which for you were made
Ere the foundations of the earth were laid;
And *their* pure bliss by sweet experience prove,
Whose home is heaven—and whose God is love."

IX.

The bosom raptured with the joys of time
  Soon thrills with fear kindled by joy's excess:
The very height it panted long to climb
  Now wakens terror by its loftiness:
Nay, oft there comes upon the soul the thought,
O'ershadowing the summit she has sought,
That since she cannot but still onward wend,
And now can mount no more, she *must* descend.

X.

But let her mount to heaven; let her soar
  Till earth attract no longer; let her gain
That height sublime where seraphim adore,
  And all are bound to all in love's soft chain
Link'd to the throne eternal;—then shall fear
Be gone for ever: even the clouds so drear
Above erewhile, beneath her shall be seen
Upon their heavenward side, silvered with rays
    serene.

XI.

And rests it *now* with every heart to choose
  The destiny to be for aye its own?

Shall none the bliss unutterable lose,
  Who humbly bow them down before the throne
Of heaven, and plead the all-atoning blood?—
O, let our grateful bosoms pour a flood
Of joyous praise! and let the tidings run
Till every clime shall hear, and every heart be won!

XII.

Shout it among the nations! cry aloud!
  Let it be echoed from the mountain tops,
That Christ the Lord, the God incarnate, bowed
  His head upon the cross; while crimson drops
Flowed from his pierced side, to purchase all
That rebel man lost by his primal fall:
Yea, to uplift him from the drear abyss
To heights surpassing all even Eden knew of bliss!

LXXVIII.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, COME.

(FOR THE SPANISH CHANT.)

I.

Come, Holy Spirit, come,
  Mercies revealing;
Make this cold heart thine home;
  Quicken its feeling:
Then shall my song ascend
Softly to God, and blend
With notes that never end,
  Through heaven pealing.

II.

Come, like a ray of light
  Tranquilly beaming,
Chasing the shades of night,
  Waking the dreaming:

Give me again to see,
As it was wont to be,
His love who ransomed me
  From the cross streaming.

III.

Come, Holy Spirit, come,
  Thou that delightest
All to console who roam
  Sad, and invitest
Mourners in faith to go
Where healing waters flow,
Still let me pleasures know
  Purest and brightest.

LXXIX.

THE DEW-DROP.

I.

Hast thou e'er seen at opening day,
Upon a faded broken spray,
  A bright drop growing still more bright,
  And sparkling, glistening, till from sight
  Lost in the beams that gave it light?

II.

Sweet image of the gleam that plays
Not seldom in the dying gaze
  Of him who loves the Saviour's name,
  And brightens still, as sinks the frame,
  Till lost in heaven, whence it came.

III.

O thus may I, at opening day,
Evince my joy—and pass away!
With smiles upon my friends of earth,
May love, the spark of priceless worth,
Soar upward to its place of birth.

LXXX.

FORGIVENESS.

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses."—MATT. VI. 14, 15.

I.

If thou would'st calmly, sweetly pass
Thy days on earth, and not amass
  Woes that must ever live,
Hear and believe a friendly bard,
That, while to be revenged is hard,
  'Tis easy to forgive.

II.

'Tis easy, if thou look above,
And by the Saviour's dying love
  Implore the aid of heaven;
And it may help thy prayer to know,
That who forgives not every foe,
  Shall never be forgiven.

III.

It hath been said, "revenge is sweet:"
If e'er thou cherish that deceit,
  God open soon thine eyes!
Lest he, whose hand hath closed them here,
Should ope them in his own dread sphere,
  Midst horror and surprise.

IV.

Oh! were it sweet, its dismal home
Might change its nature, and become
  An Eden of delight;
But sooner shall the narrow way
Of heavenly wisdom lead astray,
  Or day be changed to night.

V.

Revenge, or aught of kindred birth,
Was never yet found sweet on earth;
  And in its native realm,
'Tis an exhaustless source of woe,
Too dreadful for the soul to know,
  Until it overwhelm.

VI.

Then shun it!—let the wit of man
Defend it how it will or can;
  And never count it tame,
To bear unmoved the fiercest threat,
Or basest wrong, till thou forget
  Thy Saviour's sacred name.

VII.

Nor deem that 'tis enough to give
A pardoning look, or word, and live
  In sullen scorn apart:
Haply it were enough for earth;
But thou shouldst rather ask its worth
  With Him who tries the heart.

VIII.

If thou wouldst ever taste above,
Oh! imitate below, His love;
  And still with kindness strive
To quench the malice of thy foe;
And from experience thou shalt know
  'Tis godlike to forgive.

IX.

For God shall pardon more from thee
Than e'er thy bitterest enemy
  Could do to wake thine ire;
And thou, deserving nought but hell,
Shalt take thy golden harp, and swell
  The everlasting quire.

LXXXI.

"GOD WITH US."

"Fear thou not, for I am with thee."—ISA. XLI. 10.

I.

THOUGH life be but an ocean wide,
  Where rocks and shelves abound;
And countless perils of the tide
  Our slender bark surround;
Yet give us, Lord, to feel thee near;
Yea, *with us*—and we will not fear.

II.

We may not reach a distant shore;
  But fail before the sweeping blast:
So be it, Lord! nor ask we more,
  If thou be *with us* to the last:
This, this shall chase the darkest gloom,
And timely make the earliest doom.

III.

With Thee, the voyage shall be sweet:
  Yet sweeter still shall be its end;
Though lightnings flash, and thunders beat,
  And waters roar, and rocks impend:
The very wreck that others shun
To us shall be the haven won.

LXXXII.

MELODY IN THE HEART.

"Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."—EPH. v. 18, 19.

I.

I SOMETIMES fear my failing lute is broken:
It were a loss to me, though none beside
Might mourn its notes; for often hath it spoken,
And cheered a bosom that might else have sighed
Even 'mid scenes like these around me, where
Nature with whispering voice confides her secrets
rare.

II.

So oft it answers feebly to the breathing
My heart would give it, though my lips may fail,
I fain would place it where the woodbine wreathing
Her branches climbs; and listen to the wail
The winds might wake within it, as its lies
Where the bee winds her horn, and sweetest odours rise.

III.

Still would *I* praise thee, Lord, with deep thanksgiving!
I would not hear the very insects strive
To tell thy goodness, and myself be living
A silent drone in nature's cheerful hive:
No—let my lute refuse its wonted part,
There shall be songs of praise and music in my heart.

LXXXIII.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."
PSALM XXV. 14.

I.

THE pealing cannon ye may hear,
And, if 'tis sounded long and clear,
The trumpet o'er the field afar,
Amid the wildest din of war.

II.

But vainly would ye list the sound
Of crystal streamlet winding round,
Which many a parched and fevered lip,
When evening closes in, shall sip.

III.

And vainly too the magic word
By worn and fainting warrior heard,
That nerves him for the fight once more
With heart more fearless than before.

IV.

So, in this struggling battling world,
Where sin's red banners are unfurled
As proudly as defeat and loss
Were but for soldiers of the cross,—

V.

The clash, the tumult may be heard
By distant listeners, haply stirred
With terror to behold how dire
In rebel breasts is mortal ire ;—

VI.

But none remote may hear the stream,
Which, sparkling in the Heavenly beam,
Doth flow to bless the warrior there,
Who pauses oft for praise and prayer ;—

VII.

Nor yet the spirit-stirring word
By him from voice beloved heard,
That nerves him for the fight once more
With heart more fearless than before.

VIII.

No; battle may be heard afar;
But they, within the field, that are,
Though worn and wearied with the fight,
True to their Sovereign and the right,—

IX.

Alone may catch the water's flow,
Which whoso drinks no thirst shall know;
Alone may hear the still small voice
That whispers to the heart, "Rejoice!"

LXXXIV.

THE DIVINE HEALER.

"He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted."—LUKE IV. 18

I.

WHY in the woods, but not the crowded city,
  Is there so much of joy to wake the soul?
Why mid the haunts of men do tears of pity,
  Rather than streams of living gladness roll?
Man is the favourite of Heaven—the Word
Proclaims him over all this fair creation Lord?

II.

Why, then, O why is man so oft the mourner?
  A monarch weeping whilst his people smile?
Alas! because the monarch is the scorner
  Of his still higher sovereign, the while
His own glad subjects willingly obey,
Save when with harshness stained, their earthly
    ruler's sway.

III.

We do not marvel if the rebel servant
  Be forced in want and misery to roam;
Nor think to see, without petition fervent,
  A pardon granted and admission home:
Enough, and more than always meets our view,
If grace look down and smile, when first the contrite sue.

IV.

Thou that wilt heed a voice which from these bowers
  Would for one little moment crave thine ear—
As wise it were to look in streets for flowers
  That ask the dew, the sun, the shelter here,
As think the treasure of sweet peace to find,
Till thou return to God with all thy heart and mind.

V.

O cease the fruitless search!—let timely warning
  Prompt to a timely change!—let not the eve
Of life be sadder than has been its morning;
  But kneel, and ask of Heaven to relieve
A worn and wearied prodigal unblest,
Whose spirit yearns for home, whose broken heart would rest.]

VI.

Yes, though thou know it not, thy heart is broken!
  Thy mirth is only like the winds at play
With severed chords! and if thou ask a token,
  What do thy calm and lonely moments say,
When the winds sink to rest, and nought is heard
Save a still voice with which thine inmost soul is
    stirred?

VII.

Whispers that voice that thou wert formed by heaven
  To taste no higher happiness than thine?
That this intense mysterious life was given
  To waken feelings which must hopeless pine,
And die like flowers from an eastern soil,
Fostered and watched in vain on some cold northern isle?

VIII.

Does it, when night spreads forth to thee her glory,
  And hangs her countless lustres in the sky,
That thou might'st read the everlasting story
  Writ not by men, but by the Deity
With his own hand, as if one page should teach
Where all might read who would, and past corruption's reach;—

IX.

O does it then, when God seems close around thee,
  Spite of thine efforts to forget or shun,
Tell in thine ear no secrets that astound thee
  Of how that race must end which thou dost run
With toil and pain before thy fellows' eyes,
Seeking what moon and stars proclaim too mean a
    prize?

X.

That whisper leaves a tone, a breath, a feeling,
  Which haunts thee even in the din of life,
Amid thy pleasures and thy business stealing,
  To wound thee unperceived;—as human strife
Leaves in the dwelling it hath lately stirred
A shadowy sense of pain, though now no longer
    heard.

XI.

And thus, thou art not happy! Many a sorrow
  Of which a stranger knows not, stings thy breast:
Prompted by pride, their fruitful source, to borrow
  The look of joy, it is but as the vest,
That while it hides, doth fret and chafe the wound,
For which, if balm there be, no balm hath yet been
    found.

XII.

Peace, like the stillness of a lake at even
  Stirred by no breeze but what doth kindly wake
A smile upon its face, wherein the heaven
  May yet be traced;—peace, of which none partake
Except the whole in heart, who know and love,
And therefore fearless trust that God who rules
    above;—

XIII.

Peace, which itself is music in the bosom,
  A strain of calm melodious delight,
Not native, but from far, like that sweet blossom
  Which opens only in the dewy night,
Known but to few, and oftimes only seen
By those pure eyes that gaze from out the blue
    serene;—

XIV.

Such peace thou knowest not! thy heart is broken!
  How then can strains of melody be there?
The God that formed it, from on high hath spoken,
  And told his wayward erring children where,
And where alone true peace is to be found:
It is in Him whose hand can bind and heal the
    wound.

XV.

Go to the Healer of the broken hearted;
  Tell Him how often thou hast vainly tried
To satisfy thy wants below, and started
  To find how things of loveliest hue could hide
A coiling adder, or a pointed thorn,
By which the hand that plucked was fiercely stung
    or torn.

XVI.

Tell Him thy woes, hor hide the poisoned fountain;
  Bare to his searching eye thy guilty heart;
Tell him how hopelessly to Sinai's mountain
  Thine eye hath turned; till, like a stricken hart,
Thy fevered bosom pants for some clear rill,
To quench thy burning thirst—thy throbbing pulse
    to still.

XVII.

Plead with him nothing but the love that brought Him
  From heaven's bright throne to Calvary's bitter cross;
With sorrow own that thou hast never sought Him
  As one who 'counted all beside as loss;'
And thou, even thou, ere long shalt take thy part
In the glad strains that rise from many a healed
    heart.

XVIII.

Music as sweet as e'er from Zion's daughters
  Consoled the breast of sorrow or of pain,
And deep and gentle as from gliding waters
  That raise their voices from the summer rain,
Shall fill that temple which the living God
Will then have made His own—his hallowed, blest
    abode.

LXXXV.

WITHERED LEAVES.

"We all do fade as a leaf."—Isa. lxiv. 6.

I.

When autumn winds have swept above,
And strewed with death the plain,
Some scattered trees in every grove
Their withered leaves retain.

II.

The oak, and, oftener still, the beech,
With foliage curled and sere
Half covered o'er are seen, while each
Have leafless kindred near.

III.

No eye can trace why these are bare,
And those are clothed yet:
The winds have whistled every where,
And warred with all they met.

IV.

'Twould seem, despite the blast, were left,
Where every eye might scan,
The more for branches round bereft,
A warning still for man.

V.

He might forget what death has wrought,
And what he yet will do,
Were all his victims sunk to nought;
So some remain in view.

VI.

Mortal, awake! each withered leaf,
So lightly hung on high,
Reminds thee that thy day is brief,
And says—"Prepare to die!"

VII.

"Prepare to die!" that warning sent
Is wisdom's voice from Heaven;
For life, however else 'tis spent,
To learn to die was given.

VIII.

This, this our one great work below—
And oh! if finished well,
What mind the bright reward can know?
What seraph's lips could tell?

IX.

But, haply, thoughts of coming death
But gloom and sadness give:
Then, hear another voice which saith,
"Awake, arise, and live."

X.

Gaze not upon the wintry boughs,
With mournful symbols rife;
But turn thee now while heaven allows,
And view "the tree of life."

XI.

Behold, how beautiful it grows!
That foliage withers never:
Oh pluck by faith the fruit it shows,
And eat, and live for ever!

LXXXVI.

THE JACKDAWS.

(A TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.)

Nigras inter aves avis est, quæ plurima turres,
  Antiquas sedes, celsaque fana colit.
Nil tam sublime est, quod non audace volatu,
  Aeriis spernens inferiora, petit.

VINCENT BOURNE.

I.

THE Jackdaw, tho' he wears a coat
  Of very sober hue,
And loves, as sings the bard, a church
Above all places for a perch,
  Doth love a frolic too.

II.

In truth he is a pleasant bird,
  With many mirthful tricks;
Or some would place them in the range
Of mischiefs, or of instincts strange:
  'Tis sometimes hard to fix.

III.

'Tis now a year or more ago,
  Since by our Church's door
I saw a generous basket-full
Of sticks, straw, hardened earth, and wool—
  The first in largest store.

IV.

'Twas lying an unsightly heap,
  And, half in tone of blame,
I asked the aged sexton near—
An honest, simple man, and dear
  To many—whence it came.

V.

'O bless ye, sir, if ye had seen
  What two years past, come July,
Was lying in that very spot,
And we from out the belfry got,
  Ye would have wondered truly!

VI.

Those curious croaking daws had strewn
  A good cart-load, or more,
Of sticks and rubbish, such as yon
That ye are looking down upon,
  About the belfry floor.'

VII.

'Tis a strange place to build,' I said,
  Yet taste perhaps impels;
For they may love a pleasant tone,
And, having little of their own,
  May like to hear the bells.'

VIII.

'Build! nay, they have not come to that
As yet, I would not wrong 'em;
Amidst the bells they do not build;
They only gather from the field
Their stuff, and drop among 'em.'

IX.

'What! drop this motley rubbish here
The parish bells among,
And yet, with all the toil and care
It needs must cost them, not prepare
Wherein to rear their young?'

X.

'Ah! sir, ye come from out the town;
Ye do not know their natures;
They are the wickedest things alive;
'Tis mischief all that they contrive;
They're wanton foolish creatures.'

XI.

I heard in silence—knowing well
  That with the views of age,
That haply have been cherished long,
And struck their roots both deep and strong,
  'Tis vain a war to wage.

XII.

Besides, tho' ignorant of the daw's,
  I knew the sexton's nature;
And my philosophy to him,
I could not doubt, would seem the whim
  Of a poor town-bred creature.

XIII.

Or, truly, had it not been thus,
  So good I felt the cause,
Methinks I must have given vent
To all my store of argument,
  To vindicate the daws.

XIV.

I have heard a peacock charged with pride
  Touching his noble tail;
Because, good-natured creature, he,
That his detractors base may see,
  Doth spread it like a sail.

XV.

As groundless now appeared the charge
  The sexton bold did make
Against the family of the daws
Of doing mischief with their claws,
  Or bills, for mischief's sake.

XVI.

To me it seemed, had they but owned
  A purse entirely full,
To take advantage of the laws,
And honestly to try the cause,
  Of 'Jackdaw 'gainst John Bull,'—

XVII.

No judge or jury could have failed,
  Wherever justice rules,
Upon the point of mischief, or
Deliberate vice, to give it for
  The Daws against the Bulls.

XVIII.

However, to the Daws, 'twas plain,
  It mattered not the least
What of their ways the sexton thought,
Or of the rubbish they had brought,
  Nor yet what thought the priest.

XIX.

They needed no defence of mine,
  Nor any help from law;
For o'er our heads they sailed and wheeled,
As if 'gainst all opinions steeled,
  And simply answered—' Caw.'

XX.

And even a few that on the church
  Sat with their pinions furled,
Whate'er they heard, were all unmoved;
As if self-solaced, self-approved,
  And quite above the world.

XXI.

It forms no part of this my tale,
  But I am fain to stay,
(As if in a parenthesis,
'Twixt brackets,) just to offer this
  Good counsel by the way.

XXII.

Whenever ye are wrongly used,
  Have no recourse to law,
Or argument, or angry word,
Nor be ye even vexed or stirred,
  But inly whisper, 'Caw.'

XXIII.

Don't, like the bird, speak out—no fear
  Of evil him befalling;
For he can caw, and flee away,
And caw as loud another day—
  Indeed it seems his calling.

XXIV.

But you may waken dangerous ire,
  And so 'tis well beware:
Besides, 'tis purest wisdom's path
Neither to feel nor kindle wrath;
  But always to forbear.

XXV.

No evil ever springs from this;
  But good, unmingled good;
And, *be ye sure that ye will see*
The day when this great truth will be
  By all men understood.

XXVI.

Now, that I practise what I preach,
  You'll learn from this narration;
For you will see, before it ends,
That, though the daws and I are friends,
  I bear some provocation.

XXVII.

The aged sexton, godly man,
  Was soon in silence laid
Near to the spot where we had walked
In perfect health awhile, and talked
  Of what has just been said.

XXVIII.

Or, rather, there his frail *abode*
  Was laid in silence down;
While he himself, we humbly dare
To say in faith, went up to wear
  An everlasting crown.

XXIX.

For me still left, and all who tend
  This flock when I depart,
It happened that there soon was reared
By one whose kindness has endeared
  His name to many a heart,—

XXX.

A parsonage, good as you will see
  Through all the country round,
Within a short walk of the church,
On whose fair spire the Jackdaws perch
  With croaking, cawing sound.

XXXI.

'Twas built with small regard to cost,
  But much to other things;
To beauty, prospect, and duration,
And all the comfort good location
  To any pastor brings.

XXXII.

Yet, spite of all, both cost and care—
  O! worse than Jackdaw's croak!
Scarce one of all its chambers good
Could boast a chimney-place that would
  Aright conduct the smoke!

XXXIII.

The smoke at once was everywhere;
  In dining-room and drawing;
In study, pantry, kitchen, hall,
In noses, eyes, and throats, and all:
  'Twas worse than *any* cawing!

XXXIV.

But you may wonder why I deem
  Cawing at all an ill:
There are who like a croaking tone;
And so its evil should be shown:—
  Before we end it will.

XXXV.

Some things are evil from the time
At which we see or hear them;
And oft from others sorrow springs,
Because they bring to memory things
That happened with or near them.

XXXVI.

But this we can't enlarge on now—
The pressing point is smoke;
Which so beclouded us, 'twas plain
That we, if we should still remain,
Must die of cold—or choke.

XXXVII.

Or by some means or other cure
The chimnies of their vice:
In fact, as you will clearly see,
The case was—die—or cure—or flee:
There was no other choice.

XXXVIII.

In medio tutissimus
'Tis said that you will go:
And now we all did choose the middle;
But then, there still remained the riddle,
The *cure* we sought, to *know*.

XXXIX.

The mason and the architect
Were called, you may be sure;
And if a chimney could not brook
A searching, sage, yet puzzled, look,
Each face had been a cure.

XL.

One stooped to inspect, as if he thought
Some evil spright were there:
The other, as with graver state
Suiting a scientific pate,
Just whispered, 'want of air.'

XLI.

Now 'want of air' did seem to us
  Scarce requisite to say;
For with the windows open wide,
The smoke as we had seen would glide
  By slow degrees away.

XLII.

But then, the chimnies wanted air,
  And cared no whit for cold,
Whilst we, although I'm bold to say
We wanted air as much as they,
  Were of a tenderer mould.

XLIII.

With much of puzzling and debating
  'Twere tedious to relate,
It was determined to contract
The chimnies, and 'venetian-backed
  To have each chimney grate.

XLIV.

And here again, because I love
  To impart what good I know,
I must my story's current break,
To warn you, when you build, to make
  Your chimnies small below.

XLV.

And do not ye, on points like this,
  Despise the muse, or scorn her;
But let no mason build as if
He thought that you designed to live
  Within the chimney corner.

XLVI.

En passant this: it has not cost,
  As you will own, a minute;
And if you think 'tis time mispent,
Go where the smoke can't find a vent,
  And tell me when you're in it.

XLVII.

It was by narrowing the way
  By which the foe went out,—
Strange as it seemeth to relate,
And hardly credible to state,—
  That we the foe did rout.

XLVIII.

At least, with one all memorable,
  And very sad exception:
One little restive chimney still
Did puff, and smoke, and fume, and fill
  The house beyond conception!

XLIX.

And you will hardly wonder if
  I too almost did fume,
When, to complete the mournful case,
You hear this wretched chimney place
  Was in my dressing room.

L.

All means were tried in vain, until
  At length it did appear,
The smoke would not go up, in spite
Of all we did the flue to right;
  And that *alone* was *clear*.

LI.

So clear you might almost have thought
  There was no passage thro';
But that tho' smoke would not ascend,
It yet would very often bend
  Down from a neighbouring flue.

LII.

This last, however, I soon found
  I could not bear, and would'nt:
If upward would not go the smoke,
Its way straight down methought to poke,
  It ought not, and it should'nt.

LIII.

So one ill hoping to abate,
  The other quite to stop,
Two draining tiles that formed two ridges
Were placed, just like two little bridges,
  Upon the chimney top.

LIV.

Now fail me not, most gentle muse,
  On this aerial height;
But be propitious, and assent
To aid in this great argument
  My soaring perilous flight!

LV.

These draining tiles, these little bridges
  Were soon we found surveyed
By various Jackdaws from the church,
Who were delighted with a perch,
  That seemed on purpose made.

LVI.

'Twas wondrous how the hopping first
On that, and then on this,
And crying caw at one another,
And entering one, and then its brother,
Did fill their cup of bliss.

LVII.

Sure, birds were never more delighted,
And we too had been pleased,
If they had chosen proper hours
To exercise their croaking powers,
And had at others ceased.

LVIII.

But oft, before the sun was risen,
When all the world save they
Were fast asleep, or wished to be,
Our cawing neighbours you might see,
Or rather hear, at play.

LIX.

And then, the flue, which as you have heard,
  Would not take up the smoke,
A very speaking trumpet proved,
Such as a deaf man might have loved,
  To bring straight down a croak.

LX.

In fact, to sleep beneath the daws,
  Spite of the best of bedding,
Was hopeless quite: you might as well
Sleep in the belfry, when each bell
  Is ringing for a wedding.

LXI.

Nor was this all, nor even the worst:
  Each morn from five to six,
Adown the flue these merry daws
Were dropping from their bills and claws
  All sorts of little sticks.

LXII.

Dead branches, or young slender green ones,
  From off the neighbouring trees;
And now and then you might behold
As large a piece of hardened mould
  As their stretched beaks could seize.

LXIII.

It seemed on each returning morn
  To form their whole employment,
To gather thus, and thus throw down,
And with a zeal which, I must own,
  Showed work was their enjoyment.

LXIV.

'Twas vain to halloo from your bed,
  Or up the chimney roar;
Whate'er you chose to cry about,
They chose, it seemed, to think the rout
  Was only made for more.

LXV.

And more they never failed to send,
  And still and still came more;
Till, doubtless, but for active aid,
My dressing room had soon been made
  Much like the belfry floor.

LXVI.

I now, at least, began to know
  More of the Jackdaws' 'natures;'
And many a stick, and many a croak
Did mind me how the sexton spoke
  Of 'wanton foolish creatures.'

LXVII.

Perhaps, too, as I freely own,
  I now had wondered less,
Had any one renewed the charge
Of mischief, or thought fit to enlarge
  Upon their 'wickedness.'

LXVIII.

At any rate, so far as I
  Knew aught of rhyme or reason,
To me it seemed that there was neither
In dropping sticks, or cawing either,
  In such a place or season.

LXIX.

At first, the urgent question was
  How best the ill to cure;
Since smoke would not go up the flue;
And all the noise that would we knew
 The daws could well endure.

LXX.

At least, all noise from human forms;
  But how far might they stay
Their goings on, 'twas half inquired,
Were leadless pistols daily fired
  Just underneath their play?

LXXI.

It was, however, a transient thought;
  For I of old had learned,
That many an ill 'tis hard to cure
Has good, which, if we calm endure,
  Ere long will be discerned.

LXXII.

And Epictetus, ancient sage,
  Doth somewhere well suggest,
That every thing hath handles two,
A bad one, and a good, and you
  Should always take the best.

LXXIII.

So what, at length methought, is here
  In truth to kindle ire?
The Jackdaws come 'twixt five and six,
And think, perhaps, the little sticks
  Will do to light the fire.

LXXIV.

Or, since 'tis time that I should rise,
  And nothing else will do,
They caw about the chimney top,
And every now and then they drop
  A summons down the flue.

LXXV.

Or, possibly, the sticks are sent
  Gently to hint, (who knows?)
That, if all fair means should be vain,
No other course will then remain,
  But they should come to blows.

LXXVI.

But plainly it is meant in love;
  For they have nought to gain,
Or lose, methought, however I
May wisely rise, or choose to lie
  Still sleeping to my bane.

LXXVII.

So, further, it might seem as if,
By daily efforts ample,
These monitors in kindness strove
To teach disinterested love,
And that too by example.

LXXVIII.

Moreover, they do manifest,
That when the heart is free
From guilty fears, and lofty views,
Each morn returning but renews
Its cheerful industry.

LXXIX.

And, finally, they daily teach,
What lowly thoughts beseem
One who was puzzled by a bird,
And harshly deemed those ways absurd
Which may with wisdom teem.

LXXX.

Thus counting, then, the Jackdaws' call
  A proper time to rise,
And taking gratefully the sticks,
And trying what they teach to fix
  Within my heart, and prize,—

LXXXI.

The Daws and I right pleasantly
  As neighbours do agree;
And, truth to say, I think that noise,
And work, that seem so fraught with joys,
  Have now their joys for me.

LXXXII.

Now, reader, do not reckon this
  Long tale an empty bubble;
But from it learn, *how much of rest*
Is found when we can make the best
  Of every little trouble.

LXXXVII.

THE OWL.

"The beast of the field shall know me, the Dragons, and the Owls."—Isa. xliii. 20.

I.

Hear ye the solitary bird of night,
With quivering tones hooting above his prey?—
It is a fearful sound, that well may fright,
To meet their death, the songsters of the day!

II.

And yet above, how calmly shines the moon!
While Philomel's high notes of rapture thrill!
O sing a dirge, lone minstrel! some sad tune
For those who cheer the world when thou art still.

III.

Tell to the winds of night a tale of grief;
  Blend with their hollow tones a note of sorrow;
Tell that the merry choir, which sang at eve,
  Will sing no welcome to the morn to-morrow!

IV.

While he that now is revelling in death,
  Triumphant o'er the deeds that he has done,
Will lurk unheard, and tremble at the breath
  Of every breeze, and hide him from the sun!

V.

Ah, no! I wrong thee, wanderer of the night!
  Thy breast is guiltless, though thou shun the day:
Sweetly thou sleepest through the hours of light;
  For thine in darkness is but destined prey.

VI.

'Tis man alone offends in shedding blood!
  Thou know'st its deep, but not its guilty stain:
Prompted by hunger keen, thou seekest food;
  Not power or pastime from another's pain.

VII.

Would that the world were innocent as thou!
  Thy looks but speak the wisdom of thy ways;
And, though thy voice be quivering and low,
  Not Philomel's is more a voice of praise!

LXXXVIII.

THE MINSTREL'S REQUITAL.

SERVANT of God! that even yet may lend
A listening ear unto an humble lay;
Because it ever and anon would blend
A note to mind thee of the heavenward way,
And rescue utterly from passion's sway,
With all that might the Holy One offend;
Aiming alike to yield thee present pleasure,
And to enhance the while thy future treasure;—
Oh! if a single strain hath ever found
Its way into thy breast,—if thou hast felt
Thine heart with glad anticipations bound,
Or for the past with sacred sorrow melt,—
Requite the minstrel: on thy bended knees,
Ask that himself may win the unfading crown he sees.

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